LINES ON STONE

The Prehistoric Rock Art of India

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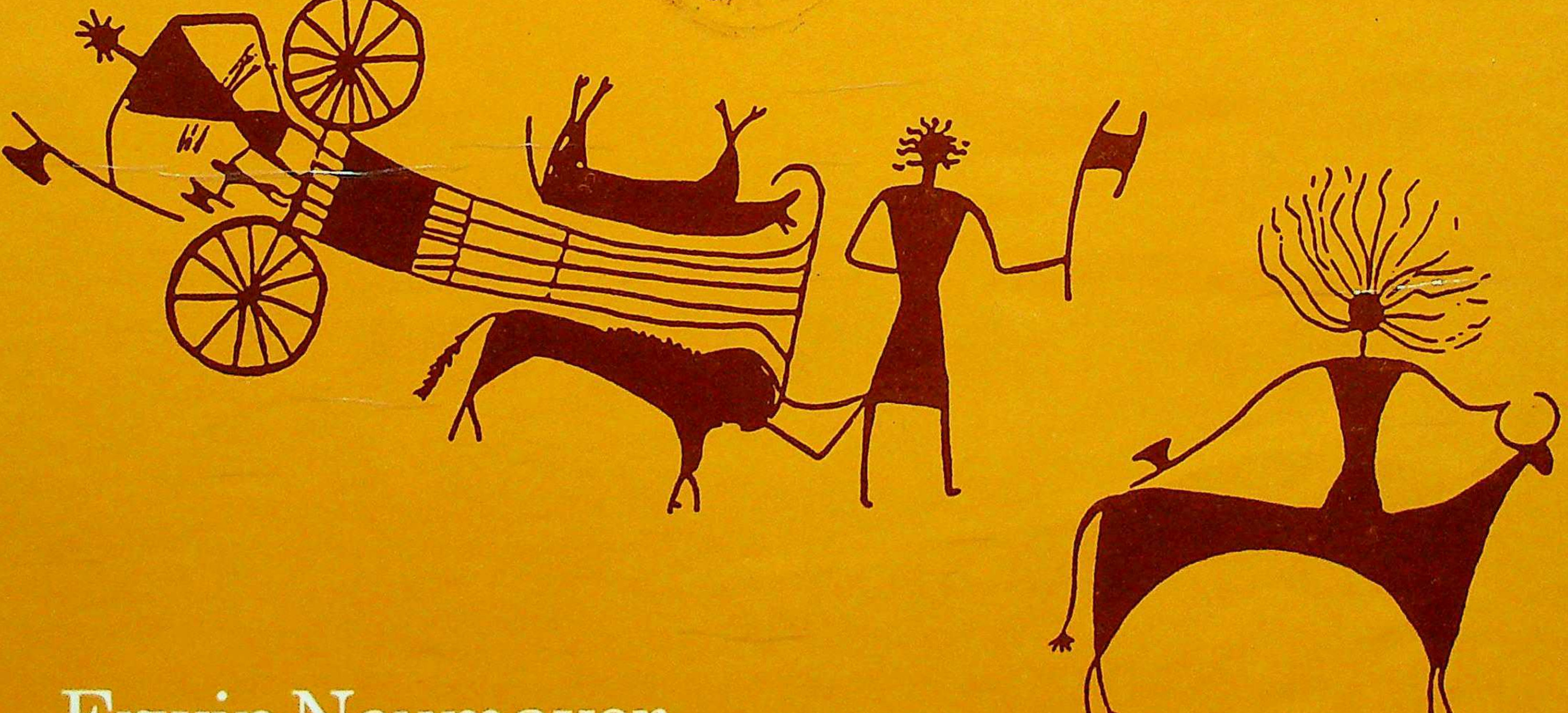

Erwin Neumayer

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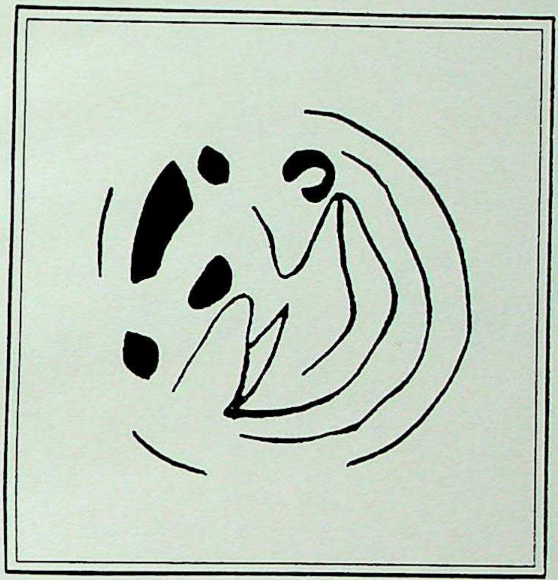
Dedicated to the Memory of

Shri V.S. Wakankar



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Preface and Acknowledgements

This book presents an overall view of my research on the rock-art of South Asia.

In the course of this work, which started in the early seventies in the surroundings of Sanchi and Raisen, I visited all those regions in India, Sri Lanka and many other countries of Asia from which rock-art was reported.
Most of my source material comes from the richest Indian rock-art region in the vicinity of the city of Bhopal, which comprises parts of the districts of Bhopal, Raisen, Sehore, Hoshangabad and Vidisha in the state of Madhya Pradesh.

For several seasons I was associated with the excavation campaigns in Bhimbetka, the most famous rock-art site of this region. My association with many of the participants in these campaigns, be it as scientists or as students, had far reaching consequences for my understanding of Indian prehistory and Indian culture as a whole.

I have to express my thanks to the directors of the joint excavations of the Deccan College Poona, Professor V.N. Misra and of the Vikram University Ujjain, Dr V.S. Wakankar. Both scientists took a keen interest in my researches. Not only did they provide valuable criticism and encouragement, but in many cases they went out of their ways to help me in personal matters. I often enjoyed the hospitality of Dr Wakankar's home in Ujjain as well as of Dr Misra's in the Deccan College.

Dr Wakankar --the doyen of modern Indian rock-art research and its continuing inspiration for almost thirty-five years-- died much too early, in the year 1988. To him I want to dedicate this work.

During my journeys to the rock-art sites all over India I received help from many people.
Travelling to these regions in India was a practical introduction to the whole spectrum of conveyance; from aeroplanes to a variety of motorized and non-motorized vehicles, including beasts of burden and the sturdy, Indian-made bicycle, a most important mode of transport which ferried me to many of the shelter sites. And where even that would not work, it was my own two feet that I reached the individual rock-art sites.

In many cases the rock shelters were working-area and living quarters in one. Often I relied on the hospitality of teachers, farmers, field-guards, foresters or hermits, who shared their scarce provisions with me. Without the help of the many people of all walks of Indian life, it would have been impossible to reach many of the far off places, and still more impossible to work there. The exploits of my journeys to the rock-art sites would not have been possible without the overwhelming hospitality and help which I received in India and which has placed me deeply in debt to her people.
Here I can mention only a few, who by their help made my work easier in different regions of the subcontinent.

I visited the rock-art sites in the Chambal Valley together with my friends Mr Abid Chowdhury and Mr Ramesh Pancholi, who had explored the region around Bhanpura and Gandhisagar.
Mr Kailash Pandey and Mr Giri Shankar Runwal showed me the sites around Dekan. Kailashji guided me and my sister Helga Neumayer during our field work on house-wall paintings through the villages of the Mandasor District, and enabled our entrance into the close-knit village set-up, which is generally barred to inquisitive foreigners.
Dr Giriraj Kumar accompanied me to several sites in the Parbati Valley, and shared with me the questionable pleasure of educating the leader of a gang of robbers about rock-art and archaeology in general.
In the Mahadeo Hills it was Mr Ramesh Jain who showed me the way to several of the sites which he had explored in this, sometimes, difficult terrain.
Mrs Rhona Ghate described to me several places of rock paintings around Panchmarhi, whose locations were forgotten since Colonel D.H. Gordon's time, and acquainted me with several letters in the hand of the Colonel himself, where he wrote about rock-art and locations.

In these pathless hilly jungles of the Mahadeos I often came in contact with moonshiners who introduced me to the finer art of bootlegging and also guided me out of the jungle when I was not able to find my way after prolonged sampling of their produce. They also showed me a good number of painted shelters, which of course I had to locate again to set a blurred picture straight.

In the surroundings of Bhimbetka, where I was stationed for several winter-seasons in the seventies, I often had the privilege of the company of Dr Wakankar and our late friend Bhatiji with whom I surveyed, for weeks together, the cliffs and rock structures. Together we built extremely flimsy scaffoldings to see paintings where otherwise only bees and eagles dared.

In Bhopal and its surroundings it was Professor Shankar Tiwari, who acquainted me with several sites he had explored earlier. Other sites to the north of Bhopal I visited together with Mr Sham Sundar Saxena, one from the large family of schoolteachers, who make such a large contribution to the knowledge of local history in India.

Several sites in the Vidisha District were shown to me by Dr M.D.Khare, under whose directorship of the State Archaeological Survey of Madhya Pradesh several village-to-village surveys were instigated, which resulted in the discovery of a large amount of rock-art sites.

Dr Jitendra Tripathi introduced me to the rock paintings in the vicinity of Narsinghgarh.

I was guided by Dr V.D. Jha to some of the paintings in the Sagar Region. Through Professor S.K. Pandey's writing and through personal discussions with him I came to know about several others in the general surroundings of Sagar.

In the northern Vindhyas, especially the sites around Robertsganj were indicated to me by Dr Arjun Das Keshri and Dr Manoharam Pandey, two schoolteachers of Robertsganj.

To the sites high up on the scarp of the Vindhyas towards the Son River, I had the company of Mr Hari Shankar Shukla, teacher in the boy's school of Salkhan, and Mr Shiv Charan, the beadle of the same institution, who housed us in his family's cottage high up in the mountains. To all of them and to the director of the boy's school in Salkhan, Mr Raj Dev Shukla I owe my thanks.

Several other sites in this general region were indicated to me by Dr Rakesh Tiwari and Professor R.K.Varma.

The rock pictures in the surroundings of Almora I visited together with Dr Yashodar Mathpal, who joined me in several exploration trips in other parts of India as well.

In Gujarat it was Dr V.H. Sonavane, who acquainted me with the location of rock-art in this western most state of India, and himself guided me to the site of Tarsang.

My friend Dr S.K. Arya went out of his way to help me during my stays at Ujjain.

In Southern Deccan it was Dr A. Sundara's help which enabled me to spot many of the rock-art sites he had discovered during his more than twenty years of field work there.
The search of rock-art sites in the Southern Deccan is not as easy as one may think. To spot the proper rock among millions of weird-shaped granite boulders needs not only intuition, but also a very exact indication of where to look. And I was always astonished by the precision of Professor Sundara's indications of these places on my maps. Dr Sundara's help definitely saved me a lot of time and energy.

In Tamil Nadu, where rock paintings were discovered only in the eighties, it was above all the information given by Dr Nagasamy, the then director of the State Archaeological Survey of Tamil Nadu, which enabled me to visit many of these sites.
Dr S.K. Sampat, who visited many of these sites in the course of his duty as field assistant in the Archaeological Survey informed me about exact locations and how to reach them.
The paintings in the South Arcot District were shown to me by two schoolteachers, Shri Gangai Velayutham and Shri P.Dhiakaran.

In the difficult topography of the Nilgiris it would have been quite impossible to spot many of the sites without the help of Dr Basavalingam.

The exact locations of the rock paintings high up in the Annamalay in Kerala I got to know from Dr S.P.Thampi.

During my explorations at the rock-art sites in Andhra Pradesh, Dr Murlidhar Reddy joined me for more than a month in the hot summer of

1987. During our journeys we could at times rely on the notes of earlier explorers, but several of the most important sites were discovered during our trip there.
Dr V.V. Krishna Sastri, director of the State Archaeological Survey of Andhra Pradesh furnished us with the most up-to-date information on the discoveries of rock-art sites in the state and gave us practical suggestions on how to reach the sites.

In the Mahbobnagar District of Andhra Pradesh it was Mr S.B.Kesava and Mr Mohamad Yunus who guided me to some of the rock-art sites there.

In the Karimnagar District it was an advocate, Mr Thakur Raja Ram Singh, who took time off from his practice at short notice, to explore the cliffs and quartzite outcrops in the blaring heat of summer.
In the surroundings of Cuddapah, it was yet another teacher, Mr Narayan Rao, who guided me to some rock engraving sites he had discovered earlier.

Mr Manoj Kumar Sahu was my companion for several weeks, visiting rock painting sites in the Sambalpur and Sundargarh Districts of Orissa, whose location was given to us by Dr Dinanath Pathy, who has explored several sites in these regions earlier.

Again I would like to extend my thanks to all the directors and officers of the respective State Archaeological Surveys, who helped me in the most open and non-bureaucratic manner with information and suggestions. Without this help it would not have been possible to visit so many sites, given the limited financial and material resources for my trips in the field.

Most important for my field work on the rock-art sites was a grant from the Ministry of Science and Research of the Republic of Austria, which allowed me to concentrate for two years, from 1986 till 1988, on the documentation and exploration of rock-art sites in India.
This grant relieved me from the severe financial limitations which had formed the greatest constraint in my earlier undertakings. The pragmatic and non-bureaucratic handling of the finances which I received from the "Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung" of the Ministry of Science and Research enabled me to successfully complete the work in the given time-span of two years.

For the help in the preparation of the manuscripts I am indebted to Dr Tomas Müller, who patiently instructed me in what a PC can or cannot take.

Last but not least, I have to thank Christine Schelberger, who was partner in most of my journeys.

Vienna, May 1990

Rock-Art Research in India

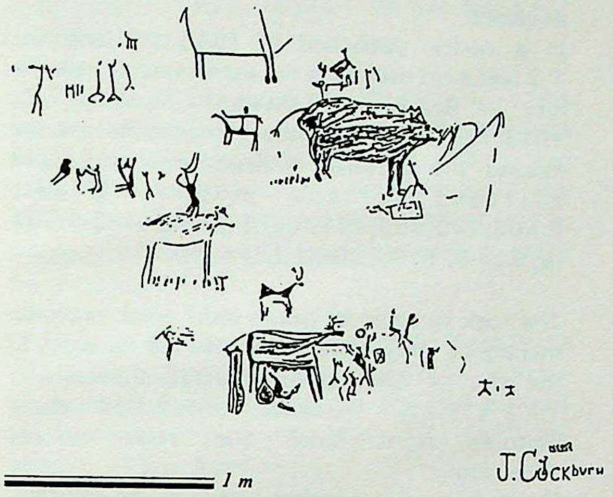


Fig.: 1: Baldharia

More than 100 years ago, in the cliffs and gorges which form the northern escarpment of the Vindhya Mountains towards the sprawling lowlands of the Gangetic Plains, Archibald Carllyle encountered rock paintings for the first time.

Carllyle was first assistant of the Archaeological office and a keen explorer. His rather laconic remarks on the discovery of rock paintings is incorporated into a report on the discovery of "pygmy flints" or microliths as they came to be known later. It is most unfortunate that the original records of Carllyle are untraceable. From index-books of microlith collections which Carllyle had put together for many museums in Europe and America, we know, that he also prepared copies and tracings of rock pictures, which too have not been traced yet (Allchin,B., 1958:153-5; de Sieveking,G., 1960:98-100).
The only authentic remark of Carllyle on rock-art came down to us by a paper of Smith (Smith,A., 1906:185-95), in which Carllyle's discoveries are described presumably in his own words. "In the cold season of 1867/8" he found microliths of chert and jaspers close to Sohagi Ghat and he "had even then also, and in the same locality near Sohagi Ghat, already noticed some faded paintings in red colour in a recess of a low cliff under some overhanging rocks."
And in very clear words and reasoning he makes the first attempts to unveil the chronology of the paintings when he says "Laying along with the undisturbed soil of the cave floor, pieces of heavy red mineral colouring matter called geru were frequently found, rubbed down on one or more facets as if for making paint -- this geru being evidently a partially decomposed haematite (iron peroxide).
On the uneven sides or walls and roofs of many of these caves or rock shelters there were rock paintings, apparently of various ages, though all of great age, done in red colour called geru. Some of these rude paintings appeared to illustrate in a very stiff and archaic manner scenes in the life of ancient stone chippers; others represent animals or hunts of animals by men with bows and arrows, spears and hatchets. With regard to the probable age of these stone implements I may mention that I never found even a single ground or polished implement, not a single ground ringstone or hammerstone in the soil of the floors of any of the many caves or rock shelters I examined" (Smith,A., 1906:185-95).

About the same time John Cockburn, an officer in the Opium Department, took time off from his official engagements and visited quite systematically rock-art sites in the Mirzapur District, south of Benares.
Cockburn seems to have been the first antiquarian to have contributed to scientific periodicals on the subject of rock-art in India. After all, is was Carllyle himself who mentioned that "...since then, other persons have made known their finds ...I have, it seems, simply been myself too tardy in bringing my prior discoveries into public notice," or as Cockburn expressed it, "Mr Carllyle imparted no information on either the nature or the location of his discoveries, and his knowledge has died with him" (Cockburn,J., 1899:89).
Cockburn not only furnished us with descriptions of his findings, he also produced tracings of several of them, which he prepared with paper made transparent by petroleum (Cockburn,J., 1883a:56-64, 1883b:123, 1883c:125-6, 1888:57-65, 1894:21-37, 1899:89-97).
Many of these copies, particularly those from the Baldharia rock shelter, served for many years as documentation of prehistoric rock-art from India.

Cockburn's better known work carries the rather extended title, "On the recent existence of Rhinoceros indicus in the North Western Provinces, and a description of a tracing of an archaic rock painting from Mirzapore representing the hunting of this animal" (Cockburn,J., 1883a:56-64).

In this paper Cockburn tries to prove that rock paintings showing an animal extinct in this particular area (rhinoceros) must not be considered as prehistoric, since historic documents account for the hunting of these animals within the last 400 years or so.

Cockburn thought the antiquity of the paintings to be no more than 600 to 700 years, without explaining how he arrived at just this number of years. Still, "Great doubt was expressed as to whether drawings made merely by haematite on the surface of sandstone could last in such a perfect state of preservation for so long a time as was supposed by Cockburn, who then was of the opinion that the oldest drawings might be six or seven centuries old but no older. Mr Cockburn accepted the challenge thus offered, and showed good reason for believing that haematite might produce stains on sandstone capable of lasting for an indefinite time. He also modified his views concerning the antiquity of the cave drawings and was disposed to claim for them a very much older date than which he assigned at first" (Cockburn,J., 1884:141-5).

The good reasons which he had to show were examples of hematite masons-marks at the dressed blocks inside of Egyptian pyramides which already had lasted much longer than the suggested seven centuries, and were visible in perfect freshness. On the other hand, Cockburn disclaimed stone age antiquity of the paintings, for which the microlith barbed weapons shown in the rock pictures were a strong argument. Cockburn countered this opinion with the argument that even nowadays many tribal people in Australia, the Andaman Islanders or Polynesians fashioned barbed weapons only from wood. Further, he argued that although the rock paintings did not show any metallic weapons, that observation was no argument for the stone age antiquity of the paintings, since many Indian tribes were, in his opinion, stepping out of the stone age only recently. The whole line of argument seems to contradict the opinion, that the "paintings illustrate...scenes in the life of the ancient stone-chippers" as Carllyle thought (Smith,A., 1906:185-95).

So already the very first workers on rock-art in India were drawn into a rivalry about their discoveries, which to some extent also confined the logic of their reasoning.

It seems that in South India rock pictures were already noticed prior to the ones in the Vindhya Mountains. But since no explicit record is available we are only left with circumstantial evidence.

In a notice published in 1843 the engineer T.J.Newbold mentions the ashmound(1) near the city of Bellary in Karnataka (Newbold,T.J., 1843:129-36). It is almost impossible that he missed the pictures bruised onto the rocks adjacent to the mound. (Figs.: 7,402,450,452,471-2,475-82,488,492-4,507-9, 514-5, 518,520-22,527,529).

The rock pictures of South India were explicitly mentioned only after a visit of Fred Fawcett to the site of Koppagallu in 1892 (Fawcett,F., 1901:409-21). Fawcett understood these pictures right from the beginning as "prehistoric".

Better known is another discovery of Fawcett, the engravings in the Edakal Cave which he explored in the nineties of the last century. The paper which he published on his exploration is also the earliest which used photography as a method of documentation, for which Fawcett must have taken considerable pains since "Artificial light was out of the question," and the shutter speed varied from 30 to 45 minutes (Fawcett,F., 1901:409-21). The Edakal Cave near the town of Sultans Battery in Kerala is one of the best known rock-art sites in India (Figs.: 10,511).

Although rock-art was discovered in India quite early, the knowledge of its existence had little influence on the prehistoric researches in general. It was mentioned en passant in some books on prehistory, the speculation about the chronology was generally not well informed, and in most cases had to serve as arguments to strengthen their authors' preconceived ideas (Mitra,P., 1927).

It has to be remembered that Carllyle employed some very sound guidelines to determine the pictures' chronology. After an analysis of the content of the paintings he came to the conclusion, that the paintings were "... apparently of various ages." Carllyle understood the importance of correlation between the applied pigment and the colour nodules which were "... found, already rubbed down into facets, in the earth on the floors of the caves and rock shelters along with stone implements, thus providing that the geru colour must have been rubbed down and used by the same prehistoric aborigines who made the stone implements. This is probably a most important and significant discovery!" (Carllyle to the keeper of the Christy Collection, August Wollaston Franks, referring to items in a collection, which he sold in 1887 to this institution. Cited from: de Sieveking,G., 1960:140).

The works of Cockburn and Carllyle were, for decades to come, the only source material used by archaeologists and prehistorians, without any one of them making inroads into the understanding or analysis of this art in general, or trying to explore more primary material, to settle pending questions.

The first aesthetic appreciations came from Percy Brown, Principal of the College of Art in Calcutta. He includes rock paintings in his authoritative work on paintings in India (Brown,P., 1917:16; Mitra,P., 1927:Appendix I).

In 1921 Manoranjan Ghosh visited the more commonly known rock-art sites in Mirzapur, already discovered by Cockburn almost half-a-century earlier, as well as the sites near Singhanpur in the Raigarh District, and also Adamgarh, close to Hoshangabad in Madhya Pradesh. The findings of these expeditions he published in a well-illustrated monograph (Ghosh,M., 1932).

It was only in the thirties, that another British officer, Colonel D.H.Gordon, tried to tackle the chronological problems of rock-art, by observing the succession of overlapping paintings and of styles and the technological contents. In this way he tried to build a reliable scientific base for the rock pictures' chronology (Gordon,D.H., 1935:107-14, 1939:25-7, 1958; Gordon,M.E. & Gordon,D.H., 1939:13-24, 1939:27-33).

Gordon's work was mainly based on the rock pictures from the Mahadeo Hills in the surroundings of the cantonment of Panchmarhi, where he spent several years as commander of the Small Arms School (Neumayer, E., 1985:67-82).
It was on these pictures that he developed his five series, which divided the rock pictures according to stylistic criteria. Gordon tried to bind all the then known rock pictures in India into these five series, not realizing at that time that the historic rock pictures in the Mahadeo Hills represent a local stylistic group with stylistic peculiarities observable only in the Mahadeo Hills.

Gordon's preconceived ideas about the overwhelming influence of West-Asian cultures in the making of the protohistoric and historic cultures of India barred his horizon to a wider understanding of the development of rock-art in India. He could not imagine a long autochthonous development of the Indian rock-art in its original setting.
Although Gordon's suggestions and chronological conclusions on the different stylistic and thematic expressions in Indian rock-art are outdated, this can not diminish his work in which he tried so painstakingly to use the rock-art material known to him to solve outstanding problems. He was the first antiquarian to write extensively on thematic elements, like weapons and warfare and many other details shown in rock pictures (Gordon,M.E. & Gordon,D.H., 1939).
A substantial chapter in his book "The Prehistoric Background of Indian Culture" (Gordon,D.H., 1958), which became a widely read introduction to Indian archaeology, dealt for the first time exclusively with rock-art.

Attempts to find chronological indicators for rock-art from archaeological excavations were made by G.R. Hunter, Professor of History in the Jabbalpur University, about the same time and in the same general area of the Mahadeo Hills where Gordon had explored approximately fifty painted shelters.

Hunter sunk several trenches into the floors of shelters with paintings in Jambu Deep, Monte Roza and Dorothy Deep. Although his intentions were clear, his conduct of the excavations was rather eccentric, his quantitative measurement of microliths were at times liqueur glasses whose sizes he specified as holding two table spoonfuls.

The reports of these excavations (Hunter,R.G., 1935,1936) are records of the archaeological *joie de vivre* in that pleasant little hill-station of Panchmarhi, where even now one can find broken gold-rimmed porcelain in the most unlikely places, which are hard to reach on account of slippery paths and sheer dropping rock walls even without having to worry about ones own fine crockery.
However, Hunter's excavations with all their logical intentions did not make much of a contribution to the unveiling of the chronological riddle the rock paintings posed. He found --as is

expected in the Mahadeo Hills-- quite a few cigarette packets full of microliths, and several burials, whose stratification and accompanying material can not be disentangled any more. The skeletons got eaten by white ants, the pottery was divided between different institutions and ultimately lost.

Generally, the deposits in the shelters in Central India are not very deep, and are open to disturbances of different kinds like climatic conditions, human interference, wallowing pigs, white ants and the growth and decay of vegetation. It is for that reason that even more recent and better conducted archaeological excavations in several locations in Central India did not contribute much to the understanding of the absolute chronology of rock-art.

Starting in the fifties, well-documented explorations and excavations of stone age sites in India heralded a new awareness of prehistory in the subcontinent.

In the Southern Deccan began the systematic work on neolithic and chalcolithic sites. Close to these sites many rock pictures were noticed and were also briefly mentioned in the exploration and excavation reports.

The report of the excavations in Piklihal contains a whole chapter on the rock pictures there (Allchin,R., 1960:11-21), as well as the excavation report on Tekkalkota (Nagaraja Rao,M.S. & Malhotra,K.C., 1965:97-99).

In the sixties and seventies most of the new finds of rock-art sites in the Southern Deccan were reported by Dr A.Sundara, who found these sites during his field work on the megalithic cultures in the Krishna-Tungabhadra region (Sundara,A., 1974:21-32, 1975:72-7, 1984:137-48). It was only after the discovery of the huge rock painting galleries in Madhya Pradesh that rock pictures were recognized as archaeological remains and caught the interest of scientists and laymen alike.

These spectacular discoveries brought a new momentum to prehistoric archaeology. The driving force behind these explorations and researches was V.S. Wakankar, who in 1957 noticed the rock structures on the Bhimbetka Hill during a rail-journey. When he finally inspected the rock structures, he had found one of the most fantastic rock-art sites known in India. The name of the site --Bhimbetka-- has by now become the synonym for stone age rock-art in India.

Before the discovery of Bhimbetka, Wakankar had already explored rock-art sites in Madhya Pradesh. With the help of the students of his artschool, Bharati Kala Bhavan, he had explored and documented the rock painting sites in these areas of the Chambal Valley, which were subsequently flooded following the completion of the Gandhi Sagar Dam over the river Chambal, on the border between the states of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan (Wakankar,V.S. & Brooks,R.R., 1976:107).

But it was only after the large number of rock paintings were discovered in the hills of the Raisen District and other areas of Madhya Pradesh, that evidence of a stone age antiquity of some of the paintings became obvious, and Gordon's chronological evaluation of the paintings could be challenged. Wakankar and his long-time associate S.K.Pandey sunk several trial trenches in the Bhimbetka Region, in which several pieces of painted chalcolithic Malwa-ware were found, which to Wakankar and Pandey were a first indication of a possible link between the pictorial tradition of the protohistoric cultures and the rock-art of Western India.

In 1972 the first of several successive campaigns of archaeological excavations were undertaken in the rock shelters at Bhimbetka, jointly by the Vikram University of Ujjain and by the Deccan College on behalf of the University of Poona (Misra,V.N., 1975/6:13-36; Wakankar,V.S., 1975:7-29). Although the many excavation campaigns could furnish very little in respect of chronological sequences of the different paintings available in Bhimbetka, the close contact between archaeologists and rock paintings, which was brought about by the proximity of the trenches and the painted shelter walls, furthered a general acceptance of rock paintings as relevant archaeological remains.

The many-faceted colour nodules, which were found from layers with upperpalaeolithic tool aggregations, as well as from later strata, brought about a general acceptance of stone age antiquity for at least the earlier pictures on the rock walls of Bhimbetka and elsewhere.

Even if Cockburn and Gordon had measured the antiquity of rock-art in centuries, and almost everybody had followed their reasoning, the excavations at Bhimbetka and the accompanying publicity were instrumental in arousing general interest in rock-art.

It would be wrong to project the days of the emergency of the 1970's as being more particularly concerned about prehistory, but as the censors' scissors brought about quite a few blank spaces in newspapers, which the editors had to fill with some innocent material at short notice, new discoveries of rock-art sites, or some other matter dealing with times past long enough to have no obvious bearing on the present, were readily taken in.

By the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies several books and publications dealing with rock-art in India had been written.
The first of these was by Dr Jagdish Gupta, a noted Hindi writer and artist of repute (Gupta,J., 1967). At that time many of the famous rock-art sites in the vicinity of Bhopal had yet to be explored.

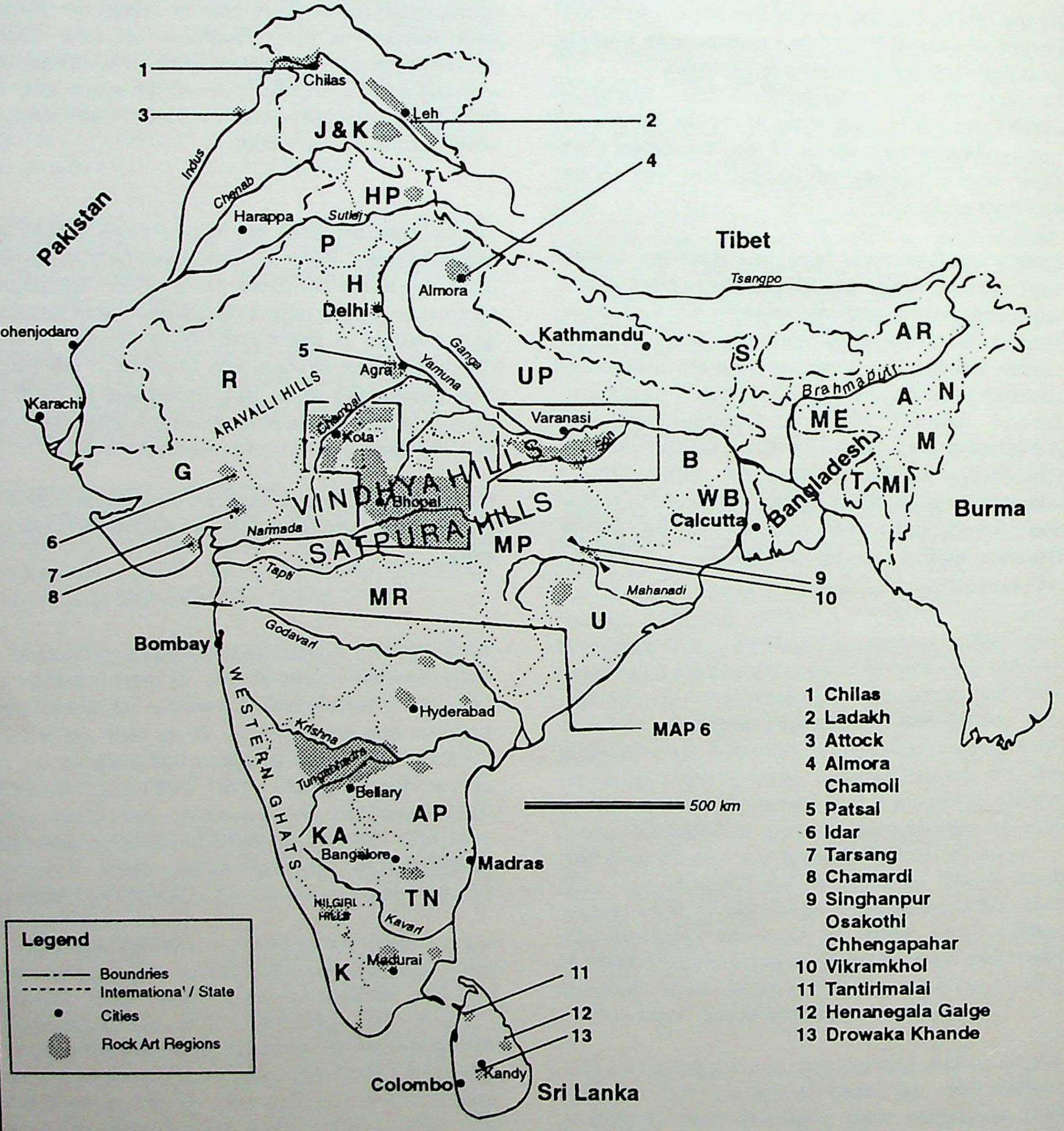
Brooks and Wakankar brought out a book, which contained examples of many of these sites which were discovered and investigated by Wakankar himself (Brooks,R.R. & Wakankar,V.S., 1976). Lothar Wanke, an Austrian rock-art researcher together with his friends undertook a journey to several rock-art sites in Central India. He published a well illustrated book on this journey (Wanke,L., 1977). About the same time I undertook explorations at rock-art sites in Central and South India as well as in Sri Lanka (Neumayer,E., 1976:105-35, 1983, 1985:67-82). Several dissertations and detailed studies were produced during the period of the excavations in Bhimbetka (Mathpal,Y., 1978).

The Archaeological Survey of Madhya Pradesh conducted several village-to-village surveys, which brought to light a large number of rock-art sites in the districts of Raisen, Hoshangabad, Vidisha and Sehore of Madhya Pradesh.
At the same time several enthusiastic antiquarians spared no pain or labour to outdo each other in the discovery of new rock paintings and other antiquities. Hundreds of rock-art sites were discovered, of which only a few were properly documented, leave alone scientifically investigated.

Today, rock-art sites are known from almost all states of India. Rock pictures have been reported from the most southern parts of the Agasthya Mountains to the high altitude deserts of Ladakh and Zanskar in the North, from Gujarat in the West to Orissa, Assam and Manipur in the East. The number of sites has increased at such a pace that it is impossible now for a single person to even visit all the more important ones.

This book will try to give an overall view of all the rock-art regions which are known till now in India.

MAP 1 THE ROCK ART REGIONS OF INDIA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Tapti
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Mahanadi
MR
U
Bombay
Godavari
WESTERN GHATS
Hyderabad
Krishna
MAP 6
Tungabhadra
Bellary
500 km
AP
KA
Bangalore
Madras
TN
NILGIRI HILLS
Kavari
Madurai
K
11
12
13
Colombo
Kandy
Sri Lanka
Legend
Boundries
International / State
Cities
Rock Art Regions
1 Chilas
2 Ladakh
3 Attock
4 Almora
Chamoli
5 Patsal
6 Idar
7 Tarsang
8 Chamardi
9 Singhanpur
Osakothi
Chhengapahar
10 Vikramkhol
11 Tantirimalai
12 Henanegala Galge
13 Drowaka Khande

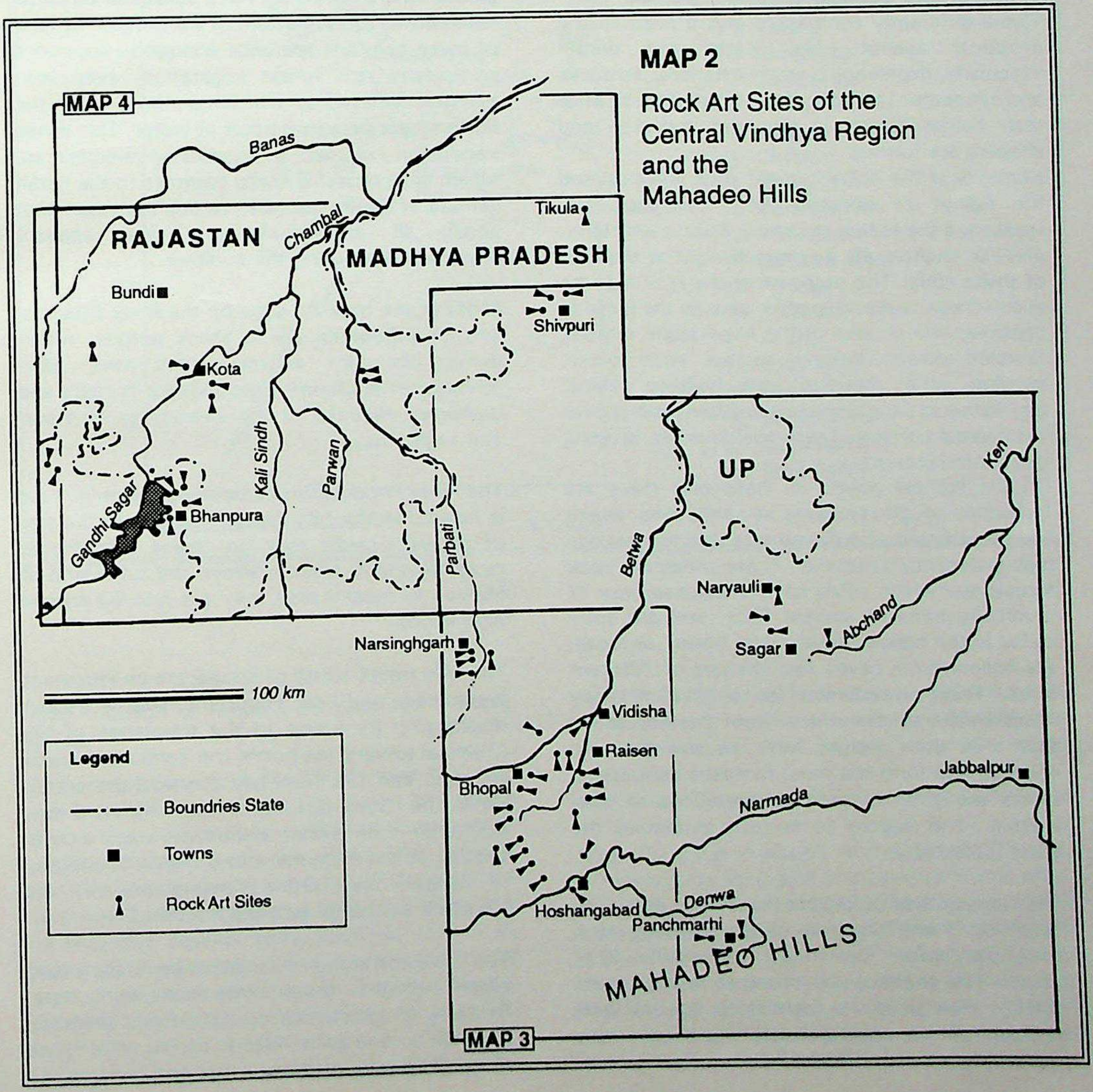
J&K	Jammu and Kashmir	R	Rajasthan	KA	Karnataka	O	Orissa	A	Assam	M	Manipur
HP	Himachal Pradesh	G	Gujarat	K	Kerala	B	Bihar	ME	Meghalaya	MI	Mizoram
P	Punjab	MP	Madhya Pradesh	TN	Tamil Nadu	WB	West Bengal	AR	Arunachal Pradesh	T	Tripura
H	Haryana	MR	Maharashtra	AP	Andhra Pradesh	S	Sikkim	N	Nagaland		

The Environment of the Rock-Art Sites

Rock pictures have been found in the most diverse geographic and geologic regions of the Indian subcontinent, the largest accumulation being in the quartzite regions of the Central Indian Vindhya Region. Large numbers are also found in the granite hills of the Southern Deccan, in the extensive granite wildernesses of the Krishna-Tungabhadra Doab.

From the basaltic region of the Deccan, and the interlocked lime stone deposits no rock-art has come to the notice of archaeologists yet. This is all the more surprising as in all these regions important prehistoric and protohistoric settlement sites are to be found.

The Vindhya Region comprises parts of the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, that is the land between the River Narmada in the south and the fringes of the Yamuna-Ganga plains in the north.



MAP 2

Rock Art Sites of the Central Vindhya Region and the Mahadeo Hills

MAP 4
Banas
Chambal
RAJASTAN
MADHYA PRADESH
Tikula
Bundi
Shivpuri
Kota
Kali Sindh
Parwan
Gandhi Sagar
Bhanpura
Parbati
Betwa
UP
Ken
Naryauli
Sagar
Abchand
Narsinghgarh
100 km
Vidisha
Raisen
Bhopal
Jabbalpur
Narmada
Hoshangabad
Denwa
Panchmarhi
MAHADEO HILLS
MAP 3
Legend
Boundries State
Towns
Rock Art Sites

Geologically this mass was formed by the remnants of an ancient, horizontally laid, sandstone sheet which was broken at places by tectonic movements.
Between the dislocated individual tables, basaltic formations were cast over vast stretches of land, forming the deccan trap enclosures in this landscape. The hills, which were cast from these basaltic masses are abruptly rising stiff rocky cliffs, which are topped by flat tablelands, scarred by the different erosion agents.

The typical quartzitic landscape are low hill chains, gently rising above the plains and abruptly dropping on the other side of the rise in sharp, cliff-like rock walls, in which the different strata of the sandstone layers are laid bare. These differently compacted layers react to the erosional agents --like water and wind-- irregularly, depending on their structure, hardness and exposure. The softer layers get eroded faster than harder layers. In this way recesses and shelters are formed.
Humidity at the bottom of the rock walls caused the fallout of minerals from the rock and weakened the rock's structure. That is why long, abri-like shelters are a common sight at the foot of these cliffs. The pressure of the rock masses above these faults very often caused the cliffs to collapse, and chunks of the huge stone masses tumbled down, leaning against each other, forming other cavities and hollows. Hard, unweathered sandstone layers often project over the general surface of rock shelter walls, dividing them into "stores".
On the highest points of these hills there are frequently tough remnants of sandstone, which have weathered at a slower rate than the equally high sedimentary material. These projecting rock structures, which often have the appearance of crumbling ruins of ancient forts, and are aptly called in the colloquial language "dant" or tooth, are hollowed by caves and shelters of different sizes. These weathering faults have in many cases weakened the structures of these rocks, so that their own weight have caused them to collapse and form the most fantastic sculptures, which are often revered as auspicious in local legends, and related to ancient heroes of the great Indian epics.

The famous site of Bhimbetka derives its name "Seat of Bhima"(2) from these towering rock structures, which crown the top of the small hillock. The shelters and caves so formed were used by man since the early stone age, as finds of tools from the lower palaeolithic periods amply prove (Misra,V.N., 1989:17-64).

The rock paintings are found on the walls and ceilings of shelters and in cavities of the cliff walls or on well-protected cliffs wherever they could withstand the onslaught of the different weathering agents.

Quite often these paintings are found in deep gorges of the numerous seasonal waterstreams, which channel the monsoonal watermasses towards the perennial rivers and streams. Even in the dry season, waterholes and sometimes large pools, fed by underground springs, remain in these gorges. Some of these gorges part the flat tablelands, meandering canyon-like between vertical rockwalls, fencing for long stretches the tableland from the sole of the gorges. Only in places where rockwalls have collapsed do paths reach down to the bottom of the gorges. Several of these canyons are wide enough to support a particularly rich forest vegetation, even with evergreen elements which can flourish at the bottom near perennial pools of water. This dense vegetation causes a moderate microclimate which is at times in sharp contrast to the harsh climate of the tablelands, where the vegetation sheds all green elements and appears savannah-like during the summer.

Many of the rock-art sites on the River Chambal and its tributaries are in these gorges, which during the dry season must have been advantageous camping grounds for hunters and gatherers because of the availability of water and vegetation.

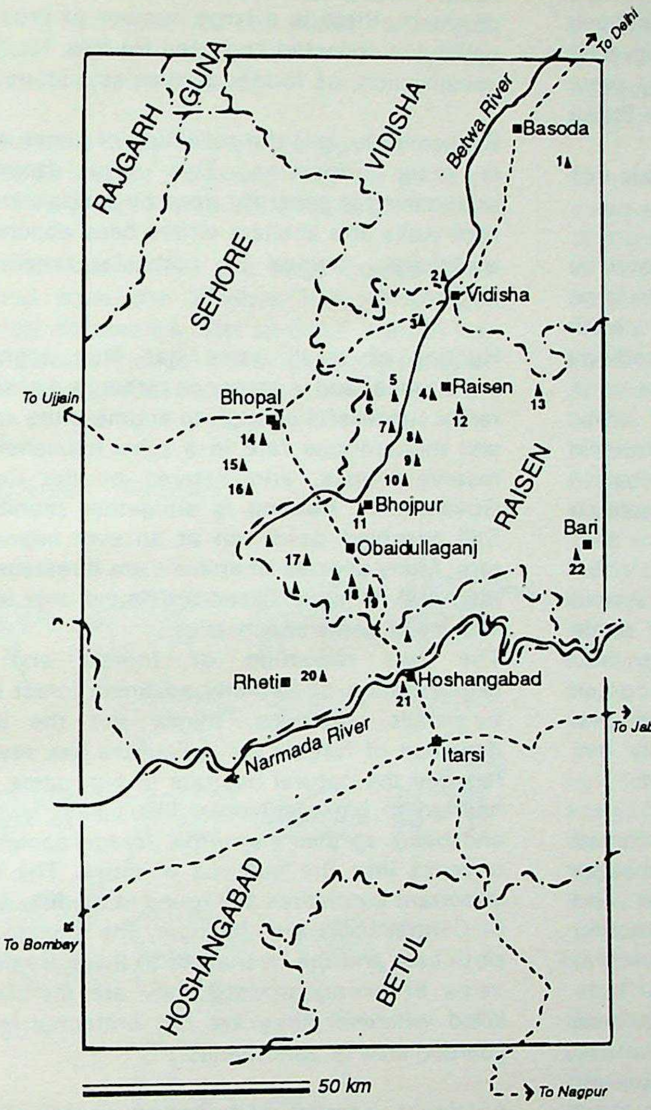
The most important rock painting region in India is located in the hilly tracts adjacent to the city of Bhopal. Hardly ever do these hills rise to more than 200 metres above the table-land of Malwa, in most cases they are just 50 metres high knobs.

The hilly tracts south of Bhopal are an important watershed and an important source region discharging its water to the tributaries of the Chambal toward the north, the Yamuna towards the east and the Narmada towards the south. While the rivers flowing to the north and east discharge their water ultimately via the river system of the Yamuna and Ganga into the Bay of Bengal, the waters flowing towards the Narmada discharge into the Arabian Sea.

The lowlands along these rivers have since long been brought under intensive agriculture. Remains of agricultural settlements of the early chalcolithic and early historic period were found along the banks of these rivers and indicate the

MAP 3

The Rock Art Sites in the Bhopal Region


To Delhi
RAJGARH
GUNA
VIDISHA
Betwa River
Basoda
1
SEHORE
2
Vidisha
3
To Ujjain
Bhopal
5
6
4
Raisen
12
13
7
8
9
10
14
15
16
Bhojpur
11
RAISEN
Bari
22
Obaidullaganj
17
18
19
Rheti
20
Hoshangabad
21
To Jabbalpur
Narmada River
Itarsi
To Bombay
HOSHANGABAD
BETUL
50 km
To Nagpur

Legend

—·—·—	Boundries District
----------	Rail
■	Towns
▲	Rock Art Sites

1 Gupha Masir
2 Udayagiri
3 Sanchi/Nagouri
4 Ramchaja
5 Karwai
6 Satkunda
7 Makhoryia
8 Urden
9 Gelpur
10 Chiklod
11 Bhojpur
12 Bhangawan
13 Putli Karar
14 Ganesh Ghati
15 Firungi
16 Kathotia
17 Jaora
18 Lakhajoar
19 Bhimbetka
20 Saoro Maoro
21 Adamgarh
22 Bari Danth

long tradition of farming communities in these areas.

Remains of dams and waterworks from the early historic period prove that this region had a fully developed agricultural infrastructure which supported big cities, like Bhilsa, the modern Vidisha, which during the reign of the Mauryas had worldwide contacts of trade. In the vicinity of this city several early Buddhist and Hindu hermitages were founded and supported by the trader-capitalists settled there. The more famous of these are Sanchi and Udayagiri.

During the reign of the Parmara King Bhoj Raja (A.D.1018-1055) several huge embankments were erected, which must have changed the environment in the Betwa source region considerably.

The Rivers Betwa and Kalisoth were obstructed by a massive barrage to form a huge artificial lake, filling the lowlands with a sheet of water, 50 kilometres long and several kilometres wide. This lake was most probably the lower one of a chain of smaller lakes which are still extant in and around Bhopal. This very advanced water management must have resulted in an extremely high yield of agricultural produce on the adjacent low-lying areas, as well as on the shorelines of the lakes.

Four hundred years after its construction the huge stone masonry dam was cut by Hoshang Shah, to punish refractory chiefs, having their strongholds in the hills from where they were harassing the agriculturist population of the Bhilsa Region (Day,U.N., 1965:419-21).
The heavy black lake sediment supports a rich agriculture till today.

The hilly tracts of the Vindhyas are overgrown by an ever decreasing forest cover, which in large stretches is reduced to scrub and bush vegetation, and even this is threatened by population pressure and overgrazing.
Especially in the surrounding areas of urban settlements, the vegetation is destroyed, the thin layer of soil washed away, so that only barren rocky elevations stand in an increasingly depleted and dry landscape.

This precarious ecological condition is aggravated further by the introduction of millions of cattle which are brought by migrating herdsman into these regions, which still hold enough green vegetation, to keep alive their decrepit cattle and an obscure herding-economy whose only aim seems to be the age-old repetition of itself.

Still many tribal groups, which today are forced into marginalization, can supplement the meager agricultural produce from the inferior and diminutive plots of land left to them, by collecting fruit, tubers and other forest-products. Collecting firewood for sale in the rural centres, which are in the process of urbanization, is a steady source of income of many tribal families, whose traditional lifestyles are eroded by the laws of the cash economy.
During the annual drought period, when the stores of grain are exhausted, a large part of the tribal population in Central India has to fall back on natural resources from the forests. Fruit and tubers are collected, partly as food, partly as cash crops to be sold to middlemen.
The most important fruit are wild mangos, tamarind and the amla fruit, which are supplied to the pickle industry. For the collection of tendu-leaves, which form the raw material of the Indian beedi industry, licenses are given to the tribal population.

The fleshy fruit of the mohua tree (Bassia latifolia) are collected to be dried as food or for the (illegal) production of spirit for which the bulk of the mohua harvest is used. Mohua liqueur is produced moonshiner-fashion in hidden places, quite often in the very shelters which house prehistoric rock pictures.

Besides these economically important forest products, there is a large number of products, which are collected and used for free, for house construction, as fodder or even as manure.

Economically, it is the collection of honey which is more important. This very dangerous undertaking is generally done by specialists. The rock walls and shelters where bees abound are traditionally owned by particular families or landowners.

Hunting of small game has little economic importance, and is practiced rather as a pastime, rarely successful enough to augment the sparse and monotonous fare in a tribal household. In reserve forests, administered by the Central Government, hunting is altogether prohibited. Still poaching goes on at an ever increasing rate. Many species of animals are threatened by men and in many cases are found only in the vicinity of game sanctuaries.
The fast reduction of forests and the segmentation of formerly adjoining forest lands by roads, factories, mines and the illegal depletion of forests for agriculture has severely reduced the natural habitats of big game. This has led to big carnivores, like tigers, leopards and bears at their nocturnal forage sometimes trespass into the suburbs of cities. The more important carnivores still found in the hilly tracts of Central India are the tiger, the leopard, the sloth bear and the hyena. All of them are on the verge of extinction; still they are mercilessly killed wherever they are not protected in the guarded area of sanctuaries.

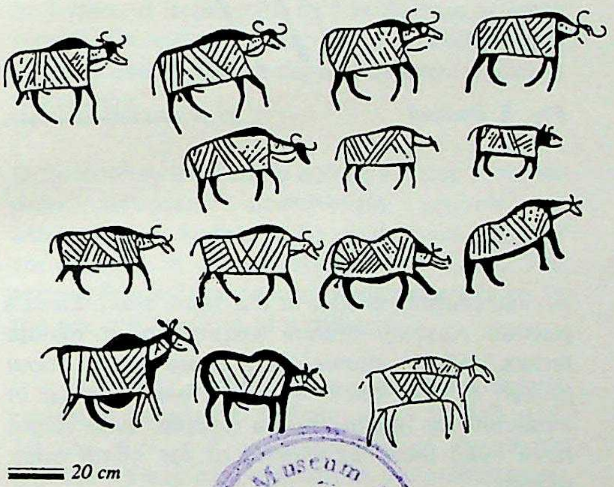
Antelopes, gazelles and several species of deer were considerably reduced within the last few years. The large nilgai antelopes and the barasimha deer, which were found quite frequently a few years back are virtually extinct from many places. Still frequent are wild boars, which seem to have profited by the reduction of the big cats. Porcupine and pangolin are hunted with traps by the tribals; the pangolin seems to be close to extinction.
Not in danger are the rhesus monkeys and the langur, which can cope with a fast-changing environment, now foraging in the agricultural lands. Their natural enemies, the large cats are absent and the general attitude of respect towards monkeys by the Indian people no doubt has helped. Similarly the peacock, the Indian national bird, which is protected by law and by popular sentiment, is rarely harassed.

Smaller animals, like forest rats, snakes and insects are nowadays hardly ever eaten. Forest fowl, like black partridge and ducks are hunted, but their life is endangered more by the destruction of their habitats.

Fish and other water animals are regularly caught with traps and by poisoning stagnant pools of water by the sap of a cactus-like plant.

Elephants and rhinos and large bovids have vanished from the Vindhya Hills altogether. Historical documents refer to these animals not too long back. The rock paintings of all periods of course show all these animals.

Fig.:2: Raisen - Ramchaja



State Museum Library Lucknow 6417

In many of the rock picture sites in the Vindhya Hills, there exist holy places of many different sects and religions.
Sanctuaries of the Gond people are generally enclosures around a tree or near a shelter. These shelters are adorned with paintings of red and white trisuls and sticks with red triangular flags are deposited there. Quite often the recent signs overlay ancient rock paintings. In some of the hidden and inaccessible shelters the Gond priests deposit iron weapons, which are brought forth to be worshipped during particular festivals.

In several shelters statues of Hindu deities are installed. These are sometimes beautifully sculptured pieces from broken down temples of considerable antiquity. These cave sanctuaries are revered by the Gonds the Korkus and the Hindus alike. The demarcation between "Hindu", "Tribal" and "Muslim" for that matter, in these marginalized population segments is not always easy.

Several shelter sites were used in early historic times as Buddhist hermitages and forest retreats of monks. One of these hermitages existed also in Bhimbetka. A short engraved inscription in Asokan-Brahmi gives the name of one of the cave's owner or the cave's name as "Sinhaka Lane" or "Sinha's Cave".
Another shelter at the same rock structure, which nowadays is accessible only by rope, houses eleven "beds" chiseled out of the rock floor. Similar "beds" chiselled in the floor of shelters were also noticed at several rock-art sites from many other parts of India. The local folklore relates these caves to Buddhist or Jain monks. In South India they are generally referred to as "Jain beds", and indeed, several rock inscriptions in early Brahmi indicate that the very same shelters were gifted to Jain monks in the centuries before Christ.

In Sri Lanka similarly the local tradition associates these remains with the earliest Buddhist missionaries. In Mihintale one of these stone beds under a huge granite monolith till today is considered as the place where Mahindra --the son of emperor Asoka and first missionary of Buddhism to Ceylon-- was living.

Besides short inscriptions, engraved as well as painted, which were found in the vicinity of Bhimbetka, there exists also one edition of the minor rock edict, which the Mauryan emperor Asoka caused to be engraved at several places for the benefit of his subjects. These places were chosen because they were places of pilgrimage, frequented by large numbers of people (Thapar,R., 1969). This inscription, found near the Thesil town of Rheti at a site popularly known as Sauro Mauro, is placed over a block of stone inside a rockshelter. It gives the commonly known version of the minor rock edict. Above the minor rock edict is another Asokan-Brahmi inscription, which states that the crown prince has attended the annual puja in the sanctuary. It might have been issued by Asoka during his reign as Viceroy, when he was residing in Ujjain.

Both inscriptions are placed inside a large rock shelter which seems to have been the centre of a Buddhist hermitage, in whose vicinity several stupas and other sacral buildings were erected. These inscriptions show that even these out of

the way places were in cultural contact with urban centres in Central India, and via these with all the centres of the ancient world. For this reason we have to consider stylistical and ideological influences even in the rock-art of the early historic period.
It is not surprising therefore, that symbols and structures of codified religious systems are found in the rock pictures of India.

In Ghambipura near Idar in the Panchmahal District of Gujarat (Fig.: 3) and in Narsinghgarh (Figs.: 539-40) in the Rajgarh District of Madhya Pradesh several depictions of stupas were found. On account of their stratigraphic relation to early Brahmi inscriptions, these pictures can chronologically be placed into the early centuries of the Christian era.
At the site Chibbar Nulla, in the Mandasor District of Madhya Pradesh the depiction of a dharmacakra on a pillar, a bodhi tree and a triratna symbol (Fig.: 4) were found.

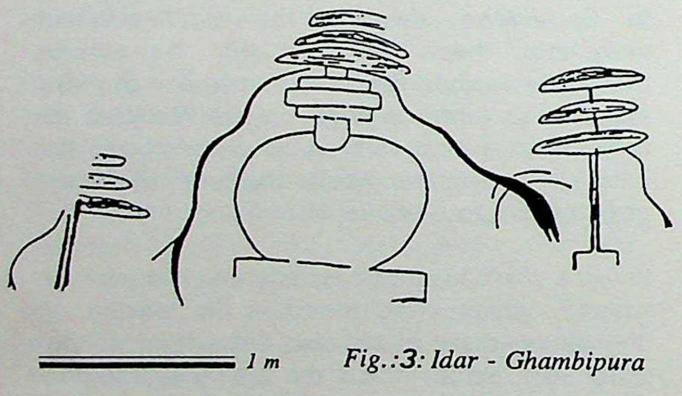


Fig.:3: Idar - Ghambipura

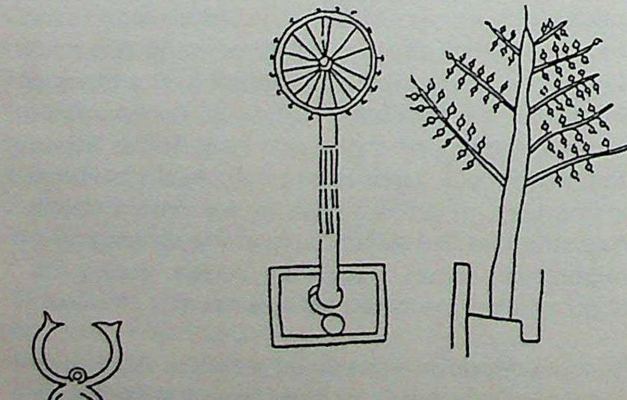


Fig.:4: Chibbar Nulla

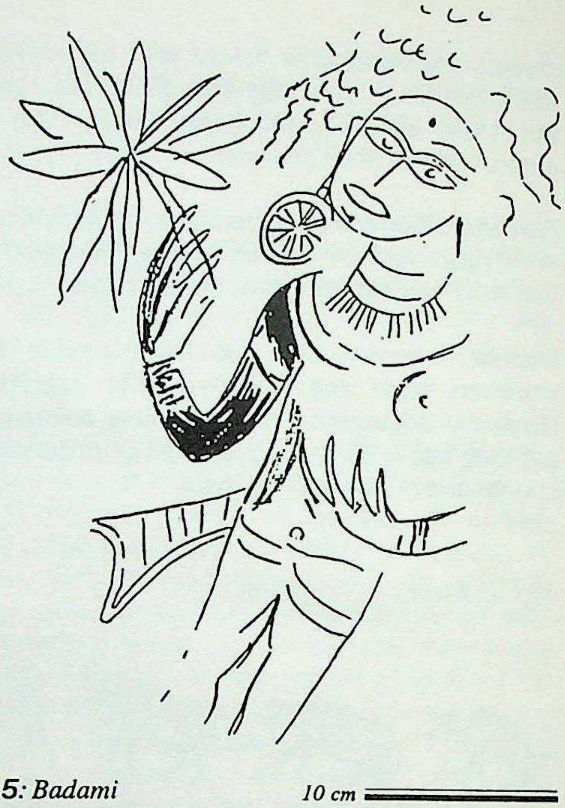


Fig.:5: Badami

An inaccessible shelter at the same site houses a painted Aasokan-Brahmi inscription in minute letters, which shows that these sites --now hidden in the "back woods"-- were visited or inhabited by highly literate people, who might have lived there as monks or for some other reason.

Gods of the Hindu pantheon in their now recognized iconography are surprisingly rare in rock pictures, although within the large body of rock-art exist several examples of paintings, which can be stylistically compared with classical art as it is known from other early historical sources.

At the site Kanakali Mata near the hamlet of Tikula in the Gwalior District was found the picture of a three-eyed god holding a veena(?) (Fig.: 549).
Near Badami, in the Bijapur District of Karnataka exists the picture of a seated God(?) who receives offerings of flowers from female devotees (Figs.: 5,551-2). In Chintakunta, a site in the Cuddapah District of Andhra Pradesh exists the painting of a naked Gauri seated on a throne, exposing her genitals (Figs.: 553-6). She is accompanied by a lion(?) and several *apsaras* and the figure of a demon.

Seeing these examples of classical art in rock shelters, we have to consider the status which natural and artificial caves commanded during the early historic period. From the early works of literature we gather that the terminology for caves distinguished between artificial cave and natural cave, which was "devakhata bila" or "devakhata guha", the "God cut cave". Which denotes that the natural setting of caves were loaded with mythical romantic notions, at least in the urban setting. It was a space far apart from the profane experience of a city-dweller (Bajpai,K.D., 1984:72-8).

This religious romanticism of the concept "cave" was exploited --as it still is-- as a place of elevated sanctity for religious activities and aspirations. Several religious sects still use caves as a rather dramatic environment for their activities. It is not rare to find Sadhus or other religious mendicants putting up in shelters and caves close to pilgrim centres or even industrial townships.

Only recently did I come across a group of rather poor devotees assembling around an ash-smeared Sadhu, who had made himself comfortable in a rock shelter near Katni. The eternal fire and the chilums emitted smoke on to the ancient painting of a rhinoceros.

It is difficult to explain the rock-art of the historic period in relation to historic urban applied arts. To this day, our understanding of the divide between these art traditions in the protohistoric period is unclear.
Although we have a huge amount of protohistoric rock-art in India, the possibility of relating the information from this material to other sources is severely hampered by the absence of absolute dates for these pictures.

In the region of the Western Vindhyas there exists a large number of chalcolithic settlement sites in close proximity to rock-art sites. Several of these have been excavated, giving us information about middens, house plans, pottery shapes and designs.
It is still not known if these people were the authors of the paintings, nor who the shelter-dwellers were and what was their relationship with each other.
Can we consider a rural-tribal divide as in more recent times? Or did there exist a symbiotic relationship between different population segments as we still find in many Asian cultures?

It is often said that while the agriculturists settled in the river valleys after clearing the forests, the hunters and gatherers were confined to the hilly tracts, carrying on their age old way of subsistence, and slowly growing a symbiotic relationship in which the hunters and gatherers supplied the agriculturists with forest products, taking in return some of their surplus commodities. As a model for this hypothesis the relation between rural communities and modern tribal groups is quoted.
But one should not overlook that relations between modern tribal groups and their mainstream neighbors is largely defined by oppression by groups which command economic and political power. For these reasons this model can not be transferred unmodified into the past. Only further archaeological work, with clear-cut aims of what to look for, will throw light on this important formative period of Indian culture.

The rock-art of the early agriculturists and pastoralists is surprisingly uniform all over the Indian subcontinent.
There is little stylistic difference between paintings or rockbruisings in the vicinity of neolithic hill-settlements in the Deccan and the chalcolithic paintings in Central India.
On account of this stylistic uniformity we have to consider an ideologic uniformity as well.
Without absolute dates for the rock-art, we are at loss to understand the cultural influences which ultimately caused this uniformity. In these works of the early agriculturists and animal-keepers we see stylistic tendencies which we also see in the neolithic/chalcolithic pottery-designs from the Indus Valley, Beluchisthan and areas further west. It will be exciting if we get to know more about rock-art from these regions as well.

Pictures of the early hunters and gatherers are found in the same general regions as the later pictures of the agriculturists and animal-keepers of the neolithic/chalcolithic and historic periods. This coincidence is obviously for the reason, that rock-art is a synthetic category of antiquarian remains, fashioned on rock surfaces and only known to us, because the situation of the environment allowed the survival of the pictures. Still, there might be more than a limited set of geo-climatic or geo-morphological parameters which accounts for this coincidence.

Basic to the existence of rock-art is --simple as it sounds-- the availability of adequate rock walls and rock shelters, which were approachable for the painters/engravers.
Luckily for the archaeologists, the Indian picture-makers availed of this facility thoroughly.

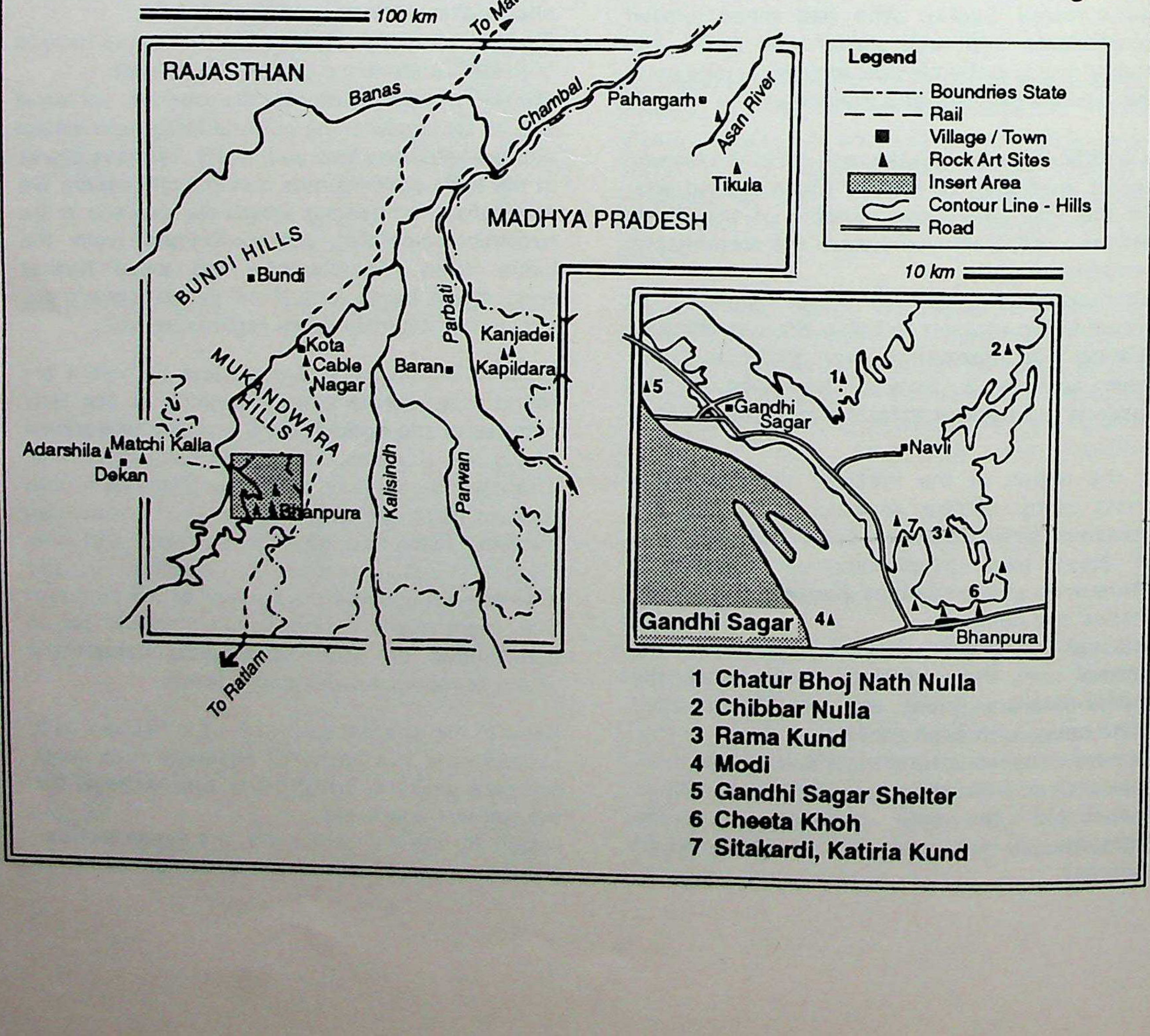
That the paintings of the foraging peoples belong to the mesolithic period is today generally accepted. The earliest of these paintings might go back much further in time into the upperpalaeolithic period, which in the Indian archaeological context is not well demarcated from the mesolithic.

Since no absolute dates for these works of art are available yet, we have to be content with the fact that these paintings show the life-style of the hunters and gatherers, who fashioned and used weapons barbed with microliths, lived in caves and shelters as well as in constructed houses and windsheds, and practiced --as the pictures amply prove-- a stylistically highly codified, narrative pictorial system of communication.

The pictorial content further indicates, that the climatic conditions were quite similar to today's. All the animals depicted are still to be found in India, but as already mentioned, the area of their habitat has shrunk tremendously.

The topography of the Vindhyas did not change during the holocene period. There is also no geological indication of a prolonged and dry climate in Central India at the end of the pleistocene period as was the case in the Western Indian desert regions. Possibly a more dense vegetation cover could counterbalance the more severe seasonal climatic fluctuations. Still, it is not impossible that even here the vegetation was at times more savannah-like. Finds of ostrich egg-shell pieces at places in West and Central India are generally taken as indicating just this (Kumar,G. et al., 1988:43-9; Neumayer,E., 1990:25-8). However, the rock paintings of the hunters and gatherers document a fauna which could only exist in a climatic condition very similar to the current one.

MAP 4 The Rock Art Sites of the Chambal Region


100 km
To Mathura
RAJASTHAN
Banas
Chambal
Pahargarh
Asan River
Tikula
MADHYA PRADESH
BUNDI HILLS
Bundi
MUKANDWARA HILLS
Kota
Cable Nagar
Baran
Parbati
Kanjadei
Kapildara
Adarshila
Matchi Kalla
Dekan
Bhanpura
Kalisindh
Parwan
To Ratlam
Legend
Boundries State
Rail
Village / Town
Rock Art Sites
Insert Area
Contour Line - Hills
Road
10 km
Gandhi Sagar
Navli
Gandhi Sagar
Bhanpura
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
1 Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla
2 Chibbar Nulla
3 Rama Kund
4 Modi
5 Gandhi Sagar Shelter
6 Cheeta Khoh
7 Sitakardi, Katiria Kund

The most important rock picture sites are to be found in the vicinity of the city of Bhopal, in the districts of Raisen, Sehore, Hoshangabad and Vidisha. In each of these districts the number of painted shelters runs into thousands. Besides these, there is hardly any district of Madhya Pradesh in which at least a few rock-art sites were not recorded.

The sites near the Chambal River in the Mandasor District, notably those in the surroundings of Bhanpura are important, as are those at the banks of the Asan River near Pahargarh in the Morena District.

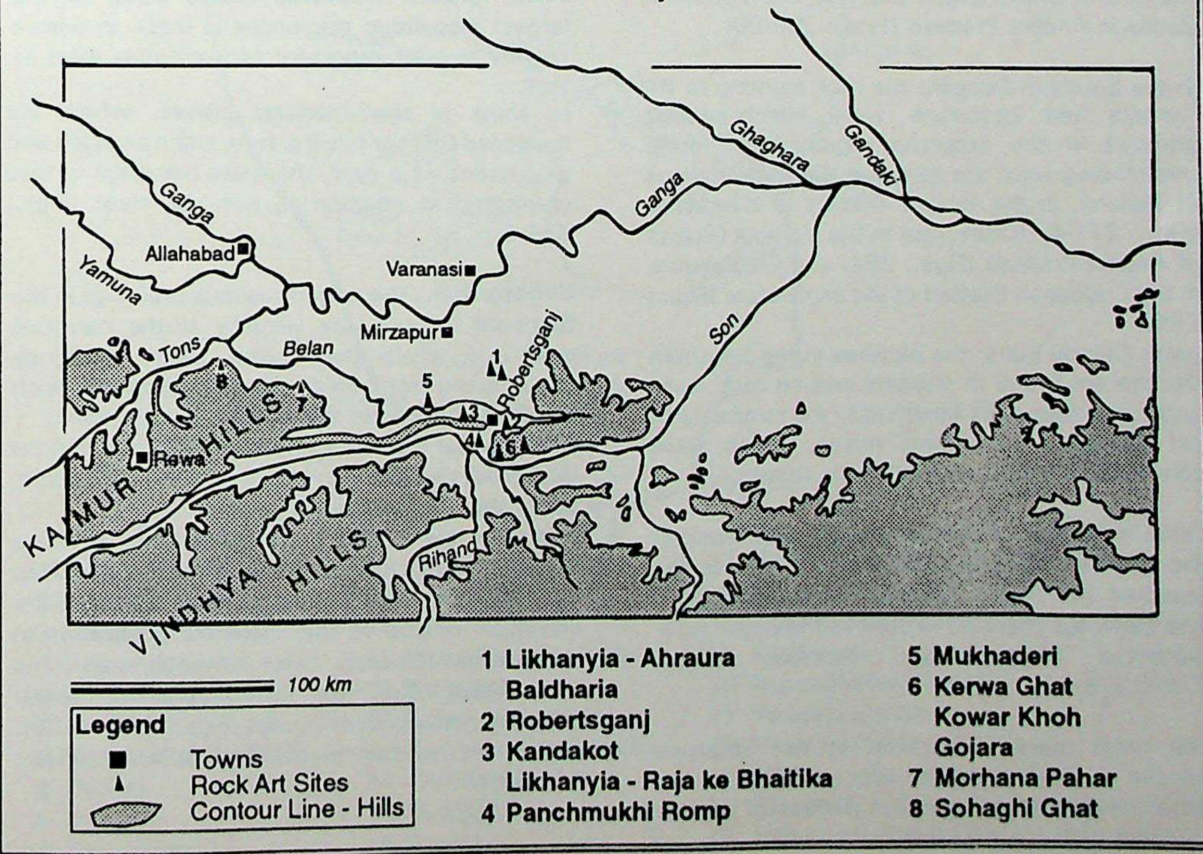
Another important accumulation of rock-art sites exists close to the Parbati River near the small town of Narsinghgarh in the Rajgarh District of Madhya Pradesh.

A further important rock-art region is situated close to the city of Sagar. This region continues right to the borders of the Vindhya Massif, where it meets the Gangetic Plains. From these northern most regions, rock pictures are known from the Kaimur Hills along the Son River, and further north from the escarpments of the Vindhyas. Large areas of the Vindhya Hills are far from being thoroughly explored and can be considered as archaeological blanks.

To the south of the River Narmada, where the Satpura Hills run almost parallel to the Vindhya Hills, only the highest part --the Mahadeo Hills-- are explored, since it was here where D.H.Gordon did much of his work on rock-art during the thirties. The rock-art sites in the surroundings of the hill station of Panchmarhi have been opened to the increasing tourist traffic here. Still a good number of sites are hidden in difficult terrain, in deep gorges and on lofty crags. Even today large tracts of these hills are densely forested.

The earliest rock pictures in this region belong to the same stylistic groups as the earliest paintings in the Vindhyas. Although a few paintings of the mesolithic period exist, chalcolithic pictures are virtually absent.

MAP 5 Rock Art Sites in the Northern Vindhya Hills


Ganga
Ghaghara
Gandaki
Ganga
Allahabad
Varanasi
Yamuna
Mirzapur
Tons
Belan
Robertsganj
Son
1
5
3
2
4
6
8
7
Rewa
KAIMUR HILLS
VINDHYA HILLS
Rihand
100 km
Legend
Towns
Rock Art Sites
Contour Line - Hills
1 Likhanyia - Ahraura Baldharia
2 Robertsganj
3 Kandakot Likhanyia - Raja ke Bhaitika
4 Panchmukhi Romp
5 Mukhaderi
6 Kerwa Ghat Kowar Khoh Gojara
7 Morhana Pahar
8 Sohaghi Ghat

The numerous and well-known pictures in the Mahadeo Hills belong to the historic period. The importance of these pictures stems from their highly narrative convention, which illustrates the life-styles of people being acquainted with all the then known technological innovations and artistic techniques. These pictures form a locally discernible art tradition, which might to a large extent refer to a folk-idiom widely used during the first millennium A.D.

The form of the shelters in the Mahadeo Hills are comparable to those in the Vindhya Hills. The general nature of the sandstone rock is large-grained, pigmented red and much softer than the Vindhya sandstone. Most probably to contrast the red-coloured sandstone, the paintings in the Mahadeo Hills are done often in white, or in white with red contour lines.

While there are innumerable paintings of different periods in Central India, there are almost no engravings or bruisings except a few scratchings. It is only in the Mahadeo Hills that some true engravings from the mesolithic period are extant (Fig.: 233).
The technique of engraving and filling in the grooves with colour is otherwise used only in the rock-art in the Sundargarh and Sambalpur Districts of Orissa (Figs.: 258-68), and at Bainete Banda in Andhra Pradesh (Figs.: 350-60).

In the Southern Deccan, the rock painting of the hunters and gatherers were mainly found situated in the quartzite regions. The more outstanding ones are found in the surroundings of Badami, in the Bijapur District of Karnataka (Figs.: 271-4), Ketavaram in the Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh (Figs.: 294) and Chintakunta in the Cuddapah District of the same state (Figs.: 289).
As in Central India, the pictures in the Southern Deccan are found in shelters and on rock walls under the huge rock structures, the remnants of old dislocated sandstone plates, which were sometimes weathered into weird shapes.

Quite a number of paintings were also found in the granite regions, particularly in the region between the Rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra. The paintings there have survived in a few well-protected shelters and recesses (Figs.: 275-6,278-88).

The great mass of rock-art in the Southern Deccan is represented by rock bruising, which were polished into the rough surface of granite boulders (Figs.: 6,463-83).

These bruisings are often found in close proximity to neolithic hill settlements, which are situated on saddles and plateaus in the granite hills. In several of these hills large portions of the rock surfaces are virtually covered by bruisings.

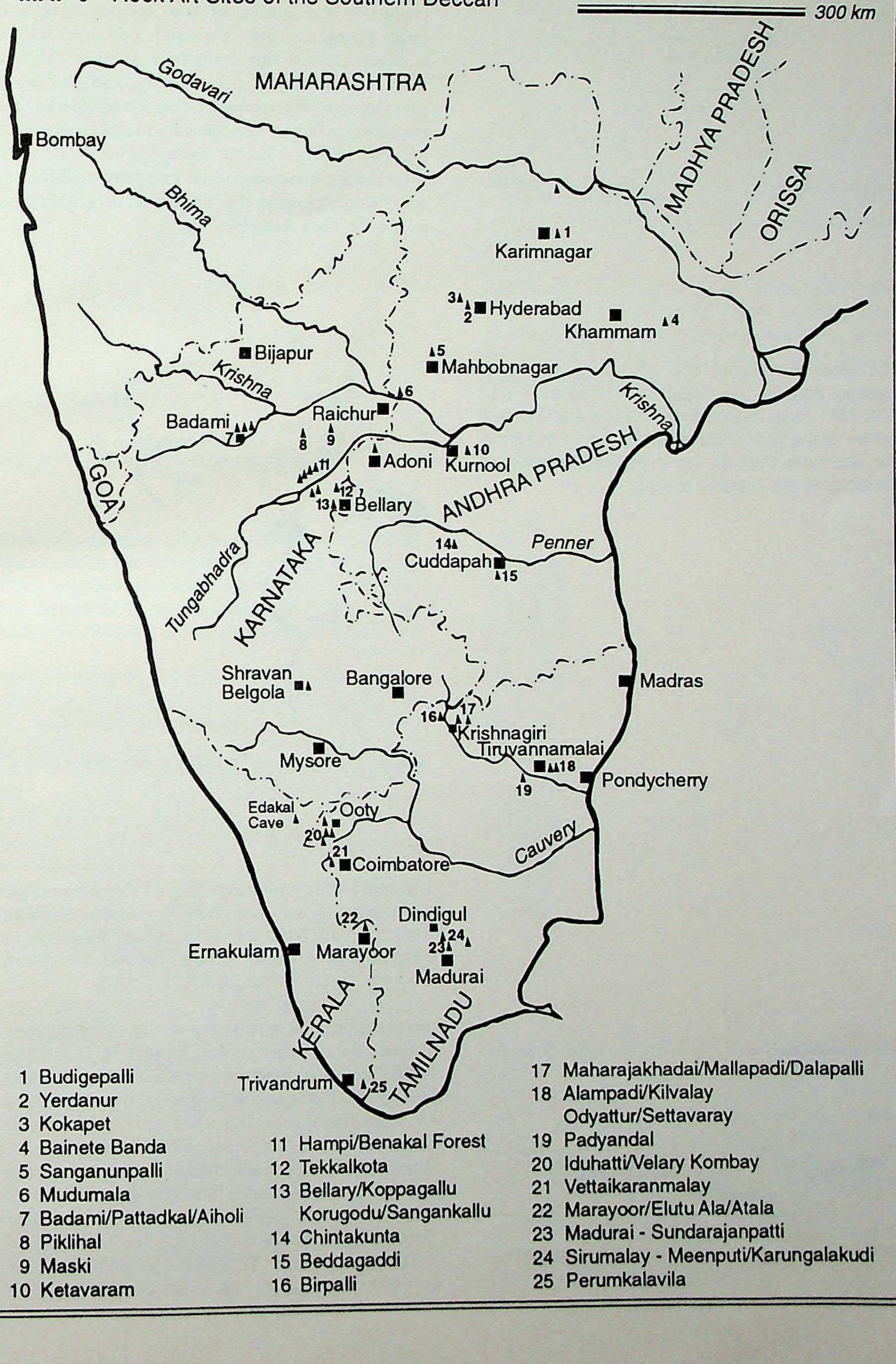
These granite hills, which rise abruptly out of the flat landscape, and look like an accumulation of huge round-shaped boulders assembled by a giant's hand, are rarely more than 300 metres high, in most cases hardly more than 50 or 100 metres. The sandy plains surrounding these hills are today used for agriculture; the hills serve as grazing land for the village livestock. Those granite formations, which form extended tablelands, are visited by nomads for grazing their flocks of sheep and goats.

The ancient terraces and water reservoirs, which were constructed over millennia since neolithic times all over the slopes of the hills, still hold enough moisture to support grass --and at times even bush-- vegetation. At ancient silted-up surface storages perennial springs ooze out from small swamps, allowing the watering of small flocks of animals, even in the glaring heat of the summer.

These granite hills also house some of the largest megalithic necropolis in India, in whose vicinity several important rock-art sites exist as well.
In some of the chamber graves, which are fashioned by four huge granite slabs as walls and a capstone as a roof, there are paintings whose chronological position is not yet clear (Figs.: 535-6).

Unfortunately, the numerous rock bruisings in the Southern Deccan lack virtually all the narrative quality in which the Central Indian paintings abound, and from which we can gather so much about the culture of those who painted them.
Still, several thematic and stylistic traits can be discerned, which furnish us with indications about their chronological position.
It is quite clear, that the different rock bruising styles indicate a long tradition, probably stretched over millennia. The earliest of these bruisings are obviously related to the neolithic population in the Southern Deccan. Later bruisings show new innovations, like the introduction of metal weapons, the riding of horses (Figs.: 7,494-500), and finally the use of the Brahmi script (Figs.: 516-27).

MAP 6 Rock Art Sites of the Southern Deccan


300 km
MAHARASHTRA
Godavari
MADHYA PRADESH
ORISSA
Bombay
Bhima
Karimnagar
Hyderabad
Khammam
Bijapur
Krishna
Mahbobnagar
Badami
Raichur
Adoni
Kurnool
ANDHRA PRADESH
GOA
Bellary
Tungabhadra
KARNATAKA
Cuddapah
Penner
Shravan Belgola
Bangalore
Madras
Krishnagiri
Tiruvannamalai
Mysore
Pondycherry
Edakal Cave
Ooty
Cauvery
Coimbatore
Dindigul
Ernakulam
Marayoor
Madurai
KERALA
TAMILNADU
Trivandrum

1 Budigepalli
2 Yerdanur
3 Kokapet
4 Bainete Banda
5 Sanganunpalli
6 Mudumala
7 Badami/Pattadkal/Aiholi
8 Piklihal
9 Maski
10 Ketavaram
11 Hampi/Benakal Forest
12 Tekkalkota
13 Bellary/Koppagallu Korugodu/Sangankallu
14 Chintakunta
15 Beddagaddi
16 Birpalli
17 Maharajakhadai/Mallapadi/Dalapalli
18 Alampadi/Kilvalay Odyattur/Settavaray
19 Padyandal
20 Iduhatti/Velary Kombay
21 Vettaikaranmalay
22 Marayoor/Elutu Ala/Atala
23 Madurai - Sundarajanpatti
24 Sirumalay - Meenputi/Karungalakudi
25 Perumkalavila

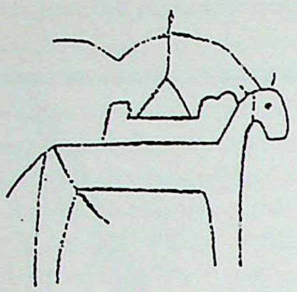


Fig.:7: Koppagallu

A considerable number of paintings from the Southern Deccan could be identified as clearly preceding the works of the agriculturists and cattle-keepers. Their thematic content, which appears patchy but nonetheless clear, shows them as the products of hunting and gathering populations, who moved in this landscape before the introduction of agriculture and the breeding of humped cattle. These paintings were mainly found in the quartzite regions and are stylistically surprisingly close to the mesolithic rock paintings in the Vindhya Region.

The main subject of the bruisings, during all stylistic periods, are depictions of cattle (Figs.: 463-75). Cattle seems to have been the thematic centre of the rock pictures of the agriculturists in the Southern Deccan, be it during the neolithic period or in the historic period.

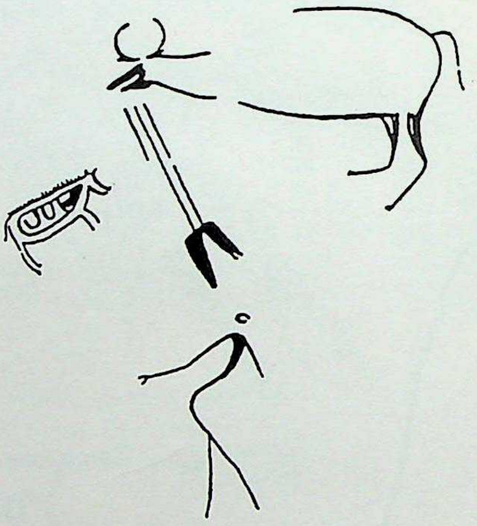


Fig.:8(from Fig.:269): Badami

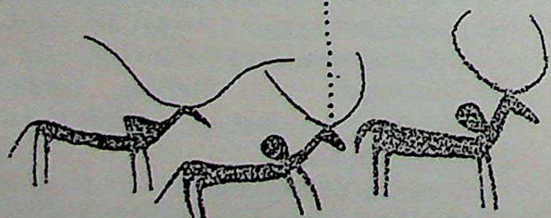


Fig.:6: Maski

The most important examples of these paintings were found in the sandstone formations close to Badami, in the Bijapur District of Karnataka and in Chintakunta, in the Cuddapah District of Andhra Pradesh (Figs.: 8,232,269,271-4,289).

Several paintings, belonging to the same stylistic groups, were also found in granite regions. The more important ones are the sites in the Benakal Region and those in the vicinity of the ruined city of Vijayanagar, in the Districts Raichur and Bellary of Karnataka (Figs.: 275,278-9).
Similar paintings were found only during the eighties in Tamil Nadu. The more important of these are in Alampadi, Padyandal and Settavaray, all close to Tirukkoyillur in the South Arcot District (Figs.: 283,286-7,295,304-4), and in Velary Combay in the Nilgiri District of Tamil

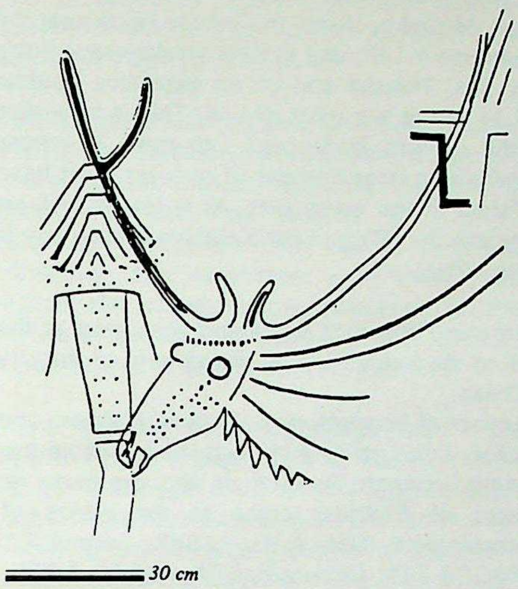


*Fig.:***9***(from Fig.:270): Velary Kombay*

Nadu. Comparable pictures were also found at Marayoor in the Khozikhode District of Kerala. The list would be incomplete without mentioning the paintings in the Henanegala Galge in the Maha Oya District of Sri Lanka (Figs.: 298-300).

While a number of these paintings were known since the very beginnings of rock-art research in the Southern Deccan, the early position of these paintings was not known then. Although Leonard Munn had photographed several such pictures in the Benakal Region in 1917 (Munn,L., 1935:225-30), no general stylistic evaluation of rock-art was possible since the finds were few and far between.

Some of the best preserved mesolithic paintings were found near Velary Combay under an overhanging granite rock wall in the dense hill jungles of the Nilgiris, overlooking the Coimbatoore Gap from a height of more than 1 000 m (Figs.: 9,270,307,328-32). This site is adjacent to a deep gorge, which is still trodden by herds of elephants, migrating from the jungles around the Bhavani River in the plains to the Nilgiri Plateau.

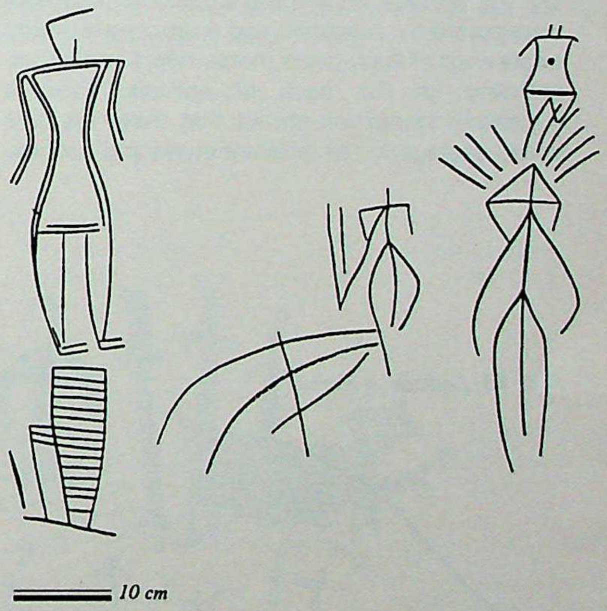
Known since long are the engravings in the Edakal Cave near the town of Sultan's Battery. which were first described by Fred Fawcett (Fawcett,F.,: 1901:409-21). These engravings were for long considered the only prehistoric engravings extant in India (Figs.: 10,511).

Some years ago similar engravings were found in a neighboring hill near the Tovarimala Estate, and even before that in a cave near the Village Perumkadavilai in the Nayathinkkara District at the southern most tip of Kerala.

The Edakal Cave is formed by a cleft in the huge monolithic granite boulder which forms the Edakal Mountain. The entrance to the cave lies about 100 metres above the foot of the hill. The engravings in this twilight cave consist of deep scars which were polished into the tough granite walls.

Looking at these engravings superficially, the deep scars form just a jamboree of sometimes parallel, and sometimes intersecting lines. But a closer look reveals human and animal figures besides other objects.

*Fig.:***10***: Edakal Cave*



Fawcett had mentioned the find of some neolithic polished celts from the fields further down from the entrance of the cave. For this reason, the engravings are generally considered to belong to the neolithic period. Although the find of a polished axe has no bearing on the chronology of the engravings whatsoever, the estimation of the antiquity might not be too far wrong, since the depictions of carts and certain other features indicate that the authors of the engravings were agriculturists.

Several inscriptions in the Edakal Cave also point to the fact, that here too the aggregation of engravings were most probably done over a long span of time.

Several other sites with engravings were found in the Nilgiri Hills. All these engravings are quite unique and bear no stylistic affinity to the engravings of the Edakal Cave.

As already mentioned, engravings are very rare in Indian rock-art. Still, within the last few years, several sites in Andhra Pradesh (Figs.: 26-30,350-60) and Orissa (Figs.: 258-68) have been found. These engravings are smothered into the tough surfaces of quartzite walls. The stylistic relations between these engravings and the rock-art in other regions will be dealt with in a later chapter.

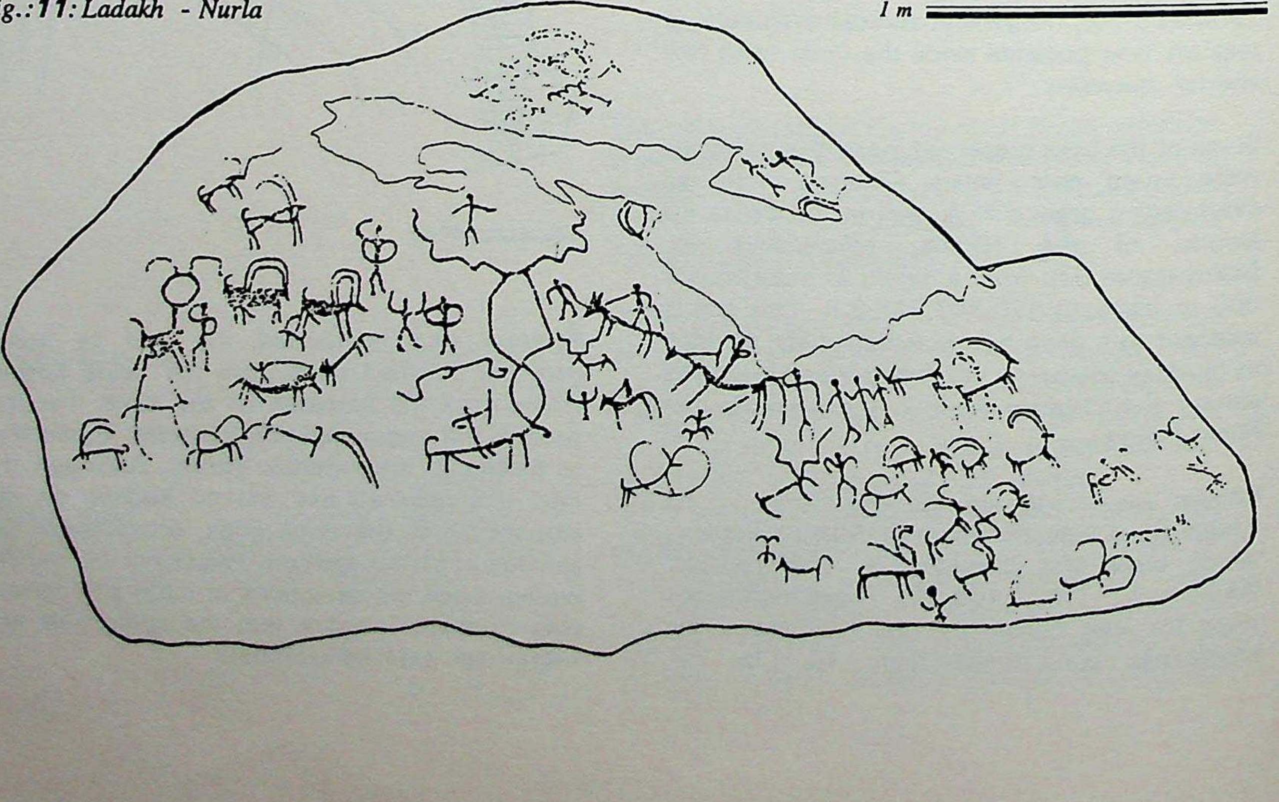
Already at the beginning of this century, many rock engravings were found along the upper reaches of the Indus and several of her tributaries in the Karakoram and in Ladakh (Figs.: 11,33). On the surface of smooth boulders, obviously transported by moraines and rivers, were found engravings of ibex, goats, horse-riders and deities standing on the back of animals. Even a superficial inspection shows that these pictures are an aggregation of different styles and periods.

The more important sites in Ladakh are Dras, Kargil, Mulbekh, Nurla, the pebble fields near the aerodrome in Leh, and several similar stone fields near She, Thikshe and on an extensive boulder bed 14 km to the west of Leh. This is traversed by the modern Shrinagar - Leh road, in whose foundation a large amount of rock-art must have vanished in the same way, as a lot of rock-art went into the filling of the Karakoram Highway in North - Pakistan.

Many important rock engraving sites exist at the bank of the Indus River in the vicinity of the city of Chilas.
A number of inscriptions in Brahmi, Koroshti and Chinese, referring to early historic travellers and pilgrims between Turkesthan and the Buddhist centres of Ghandar came to the notice of archaeologists (Dani,A.H., 1983; Jettmar,K., 1980:185-221; Jettmar,K. & Thewalt,V., 1985). The earlier engravings show clear stylistic affinities with the iconography of the "euro/asiatic animal style" of the bronze age.

In Ladakh several of the earlier engravings near Mulbekh can be compared to the engraving found on a stone slab at the neolithic site of Burzahom in the Kashmir Valley (IAR.: 1965/6:19, Pl IX B, X; Pande,B.M., 1973:134-8).

*Fig.: **11**: Ladakh - Nurla*



The presence of stone tool-using hunters in Ladakh is indicated by such tools found by the author in 1981 near Mulbekh.

Further rock engraving sites have been noticed in the Zanskar Valley, which are quite similar to the engravings in Ladakh. Depictions of ibex and goats are still an integral part of the religious-iconic repertoire of many peoples in the Himalayas and Karakoram even today, which makes the chronological evaluation of these figures more difficult (Francfort,H.P., Klodzinski,D. & Mascle,G., 1990:5-27).

More recently, rock engravings were marked near the ancient monastery at Tabo in the Spiti Valley. Although most of the picture bearing rocks were dynamited during "development" works, a few remaining ones bear some of the most important prehistoric engravings known so far from the Indian Himalayas (Sinha.A.K., 1990/1:90-2; Neumayer,E., 1992).

More than fifty years back, engravings on smothered rocks were reported at the banks of the Indus River near Attock by Cuthbert King and D.H. Gordon. These engravings also show horse-riders and even a bullock-cart, besides the usual stick-figured quadruped and anthropomorphs (King,C., 1940: 65-8; Gordon,M.E. & Gordon,D.H., 1941:197-202, Pls 4-12).

In the foothills of the Himalayan Range close to the ancient city of Almora and near to Chamoli in Garhwal several rock-walls with red paintings were noticed (Fig.: 12). None of these sites is potentially rich enough to allow a fruitful stylistic evaluation. The cultural setting of the authors of these pictures can not be understood from these pictures alone. But these pictures serve as a first indication that it is possible for paintings to withstand even the extremely humid climate of the Himalayan foothills.

As we have shown, rock pictures are a phenomenon found distributed over large areas of the Indian subcontinent in many different topographical, geological and climatic settings. Surprisingly, no rock-art has yet been found in the deccan trap regions and in lime stone regions. It seems, that these formations could not sustain mineral colour for a long period.

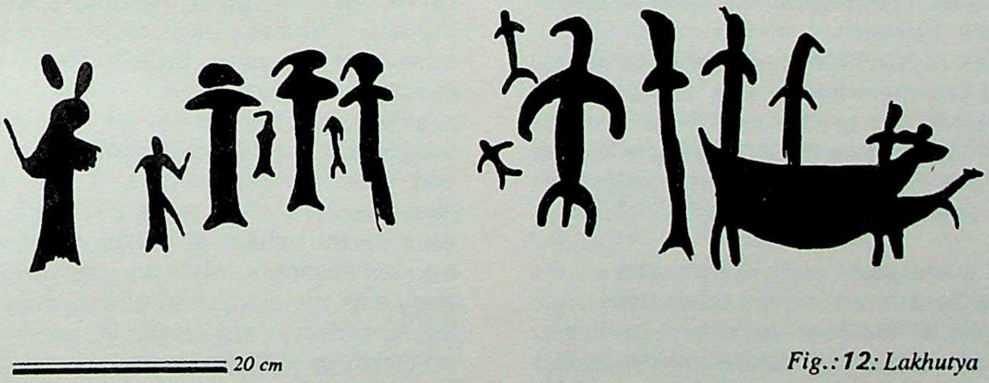


Fig.: 12: Lakhutya

Condition of Preservation of Rock Pictures

As already mentioned, most rock paintings in India are found in the sandstone regions and to a lesser extent in the granite regions.

The most frequently used colour for rock paintings is red in several shades from a rather dark violet to a yellowish brick-coloured red. The next most frequently used colour is white in different shades of purity.
The red colour is derived in most cases from nodules of iron oxide which are found abundantly wherever lateritic deposits are found. Faceted iron oxide nodules have been frequently found in mesolithic assemblages in surface accumulations as well as from archaeologically exposed layers.

On account of its physical microstructure, iron oxide has excellent adhesive properties, which still make it a much sought after basic material for the colour industry. Iron oxide is, even today, the most widely used traditional paint material.

The colour was produced --as it still is-- by rubbing the nodules on a plain rock surface, and mixing the dust with water. Iron oxide and water formed the pigment.
Off and on researchers speculate about binding materials like the white of egg, blood, and fat which are believed to have been mixed with the pigment. Up till now no binding material was found in the analysis of sample of pigment from rock painting in India (Tewari,R., 1990:56-9).

The fine microscopic scale-like particles of the iron oxide penetrated into the pores and minute depressions of the rock surfaces, where they formed a nucleus of further oxidation.This chemical reaction caused the blurred impression of lines, and gave softness and ambivalence to lines and forms.

On the smooth rock surfaces of the Vindhya Hills and other quartzite rocks, the original pigment of the paintings has, in many cases, long since weathered away. What is left are oxidation-shadows of these paintings, which at times are sealed by a transparent, glossy silica skin. Some of the oldest paintings are so well protected by this natural varnish, that they seem perfectly preserved even at places where rainwater gushes over them during the rainy season. There are also instances where the silica skins are not translucent, but of a grey and quite opaque nature, making the pictures beneath almost invisible. Other paintings are covered by a heavy sinter accumulation, which, while obliterating the paintings, does not destroy them.
My observations during field work in the monsoon season was, that the impact of the raindrops throw up dust, which settles in the already humid lower parts of the rock walls inside the shelters. And it is exactly these parts of the shelter walls, which generally show a thick layer of opaque patina, which has obscured all traces of paintings.
These dust-patinas are vulnerable to the growth of lichens, fungi and other micro organisms.
There are also sinter aggregations, which consist of mineral salts, which seep out of faults in the rock surface. These sinter accumulations appear sometimes in artificial looking colours.
In Nagourie, a site close to Sanchi, a copper-green mineral seeps out of the rock. Close to Kandakot several rock walls exist, which are covered by a brightly pinkish-violet patina.
The dust patina as well as the mineral sinters are dissolvable by water. So it happens that early paintings, which were done before the aggregation of the patina, are freed from these opaque skins by trickles of water which found its way over the rock surface. If this water has dissolved parts of a patina on which paintings were extant, earlier paintings might appear in their old freshness, while the later paintings fade away with the dissolution of the patina.
Similar effects are seen in older pictures, executed in brighter and obviously better pigment than the overlaying later pictures. While the younger pictures decay, the older pictures appear brighter and fresher. This effect is particularly dramatic on several painted shelters in Satkunda, where white paintings of the chalcolithic period are overlaid by very dim white historic paintings.

Many rock paintings which are now unicoloured were originally done polychrome, mostly in red and white. While the red colour could withstand the ravages of time, only traces of white colour

has remained.
Quite often the red paintings represent only the outlines of the original pictures, which were filled in white. White colour was prepared from lime nodules which are found frequently in clayey soils. White pigments prepared from mineralized white chalcedony were used rarely.
As already mentioned, in many cases the remaining red paintings are only the original contour lines of the actual pictures. There are several rock-art sites where only these contour lines have remained, which give the impression of a particularly stiff and placid style of mesolithic rock painting. This holds true of many mesolithic paintings in the Chambal Region (Figs.: 49,93-4,150,161,234). Only in a few very protected spots remains of the original polychrome paintings are still extant. Several well preserved polychrome picture groups were also found at Bori in the Mahdeo Hills (Figs.: 179,184).

Besides red and white, green and yellow colours were used, particularly in the earliest rock painting styles. These pigments derive from mineralized chalcedony of the respective colours. In several cases white chalcedony was used to produce paintings. The green, yellow and white colours are found only in the trap regions, and even there these chalky minerals are not found frequently.
These green paintings which have remained, are seldom in a good state of preservation. Still, several polychrome paintings are known in which red, green and yellow were used.
Well preserved individual figures or even groups of such paintings are only known from the regions around Bhopal and from the site Gupha Masir in the Vidisha District (Figs.: 38,42,56-7,62,71,84-6,124,165,233,235,694). But traces of green and yellow colour are known from many rock-art sites in Central India, as well as from Orissa.

White is the prevalent colour of paintings during all stylistic periods in the Mahadeo Hills. There seems to be a simple reason for this. Since the sandstone in the Mahadeo Hills has a naturally reddish tint, white is the better colour of contrast.
The sandstone of the Mahadeo Hills is large-grained and the painter had to apply the pigment thickly in an almost pasty condition. Yet, many paintings, particularly of the historic period, are of considerable refinement, and several of the pictures are comparable to miniature painting (Figs.: 25,613-90).

Besides the general colours of red and white, the rock painters in the Mahadeo Hills did use several shades of pigments. In the mesolithic painting groups different shades of red and pink were used in single figures (Fig.: 50).

There is a particular source of pigment which seems to have been exploited by the people in the Mahadeo Hills. These natural pigments can be collected from hollows inside the sandstone, from where it can be extracted by a spatula wherever such a cavity is exposed. The mineral which is found in these caverns is extremely smooth and has a graphite-like feeling. Since these inclosures of pigments are found mostly in the pebbly strata in rock faces, I conclude that these minerals were trapped during the deposition of the sediments.
These pigments have extremely strong colours, particularly white and red. If one of these hollows filled with red pigment gets exposed during the rainy season, a trickle of blood-like colour can be seen running down the rock faces.
That this material was used by the rock painters is clear from the find of a white, phallic-shaped colour-piece in a shelter near Panchmarhi. It is likely that this piece is the petrified content of a colour container made of perishable material, may be a bamboo tube or a bovid's horn. As there are historic paintings in this particular shelter, I presume that the painter left his colour container.

Besides temperature, humidity is the most important constituent of the climatic condition in a shelter. Since the temperature inside a shelter is generally lower than in the open, the relative humidity inside the shelter is of course higher. High humidity in a shelter furthers the growth of bacteria. In several instances it could be observed that white paintings, most probably done from lime pigments, have changed their colour to black. This phenomenon was present in several shelters in the Mahadeo Hills.

Growth and decay of micro-organism leads to the growth of higher plants like fungi and lichens, whose micelle and roots take salts and minerals off the rock, and so weaken the surface, which ultimately lead to the abrasion of the surface and the destruction of paintings placed on it.

Paintings on granite surfaces seem --as a general rule-- not as durable as paintings on sandstone. Indeed, most of the old paintings in the Southern Deccan were found in the quartzite regions.

A considerable number of mesolithic paintings were found on granite rocks as well. These paintings are found in particularly well-protected

spots and hollows. In most cases these paintings have been placed on to a grayish patina, which has encrusted the granite surfaces.
The paintings, which withstand the ravages of time are quite often done in red and white. The white colour is almost invisible for lack of contrast. At the sites of Alampadi and Settavaray in particular, traces of polychrome paintings are clearly visible (Figs.: 287,295,304,346-8).

The great mass of rock-art in the Southern Deccan consists of rock bruisings. The surface of the granite blocks is structured rather like sandpaper, with crystalline particles forming a rough surface, which was polished wherever a line or area was drawn by the help of a stone. Pictures done with this technique could survive for millennia even on the unprotected rock surfaces. These bruisings' colour, which when fresh are white and in strong contrast to the rock surfaces, turn to the same brownish tint as the unbruised granite surfaces. The visibility of many of these bruisings depends on the direction of reflecting light. It is surprising how some pictures appear at their brightest in direct sunlight, while with changing light, or after rain, other pictures will "appear" clearly visible.

The granite hills are to a large extent used as grazing grounds for the livestock of villages situated in the vicinity. It is common to see little shepherd boys or girls sitting on elevated boulders to have a strategic view of their flocks of sheep, goats and may be a few heads of cattle.
These elevated viewpoints were already used during prehistoric times as rock pictures at such spots clearly indicate.

That this close contact between the rock pictures and the shepherds results in some reactions, is clear from a number of "rejuvenated" pictures. Ancient figures have been redrawn, and enlarged by symbols of modern, everyday iconography, like party symbols, or if the copyist is more ambitious he will also introduce a lorry or the like. Recently executed bruisings are easily discernible for the brightness of their appearance.

At many of these "view points" and other commanding spots, stone gongs or lithophones can be found. These are projecting rock slabs of which one end is caught under the weight of adjacent masses of stone, while the free end is able to vibrate when struck with a stick or a stone. The sound of these "singing stones" carries very far. If these stones are situated inside a hollow, the sound will be amplified like in a resonance body. Abrasions and circular grooves at the periphery of such "singing stones" show that they were used frequently. Several of these "lithophones" are covered by bruisings.

Rarely are bruisings found on quartzite rocks. The obvious reason for that is the extreme toughness of the stone. One such engraving near Badami shows a chariot (Fig.: 469), another from Chintakunta in Andhra Pradesh shows a bull on a "T-stand", which is comparable to similar pictures from Koppagallu and elsewhere in Karnataka (Figs.: 472-4).

Surprisingly, all known bruisings were done when animal breeding and agriculture were well established. None of the thousands of bruisings found till now stylistically tallies with the paintings of the hunting and gathering cultures, which sometimes are available at the same site.

It is a matter of regret that many of the bruising sites are in granite hills, which in recent years are increasingly mined for construction material. While until recently the mining was done on a small scale and by hand, this has increased manyfold. Nowadays there is hardly a hill which is not scarred by dynamite blastings in a most unscientific and uncontrolled way.
Since the granite hills are important biotopes for the agricultural communities in the Deccan, in a landscape which otherwise is deprived of forest vegetation and for that reason prone to drought, the degradation of these last natural biotopes will cause the collapse of traditional grazing systems and surface water management.

That nobody takes care of the ancient remains like neolithic or megalithic sites, nor even of abandoned temples, --a cultural blunder-- almost seems secondary to the ecological magnitude of this problem.
Some of the most important neolithic/chalcolithic sites in the Southern Deccan, like Sangankallu were allowed to be dynamited, including the rock paintings which existed in the top rocks of the hill. Beneath the hill settlement of Koppagallu a stone-crashing plant of the Public Works Department (PWD) is gnawing at the rock. The bruised rocks adjacent to the neolithic ashmound had been dynamited for road-filling material.

The Chronology of the Rock Pictures

"There is yet no method, to date rock pictures directly." This statement of Le Roi Gurhan still holds true in Indian rock-art research.

Questions about the age of the Indian rock pictures are posed with such urgency, that it hardly permits a patient answer. Serious answers on the pictures' antiquity can only be on the basis of probabilities and not in absolute terms.

Since the Indian rock pictures are very often placed one over another, the building up of a relative chronology is theoretically quite easy. One has only to observe the stylistic features of the successive paintings. While the stratigraphic lowest painting must be the oldest on a given rock wall, the successive pictures will be younger. But there is no way of telling how much time difference lies between the successive layers of paints.

To correlate the relative chronology with chronologically relevant features which are shown in the pictures is the next step towards unravelling the age of the rock pictures.
Pictures, showing neither domesticated nor ridden animals, nor giving any hint about the use of metal weapons are most probably products of a people who did not know these innovations.
Fortunately, rock paintings in Central India are both numerous and extremely narrative. A thematic analysis therefore can establish a wide-ranging picture of the technological and social conditions under which these paintings were done. To correlate these findings with archaeologically known facts will bring us closer to a technologically defined periodization. This periodization allows us to combine particular styles under two distinct groups: the pictures of the hunters and gatherers, and the pictures of agriculturists.

A more or less absolute dating is only possible with those paintings which are accompanied by inscriptions whose style of writing and age are known fairly well.
Besides this, only those paintings are dateable in which inscriptions also give the date and even the day of their production. Since this exactness is only available in a few instances of rather recent origin they are without much relevance for present rock-art research.

The earliest inscriptions which appear at Indian rock-art sites are in Asokan-Brahmi, the mother-script to all further Indian writing systems.

The division into prehistoric, protohistoric, and historic paintings is very synthetic and does not conform to the subdivision into hunting and gathering or agricultural origin. Still these subdivisions will be used quite frequently, denoting as they do, pictures which were done before the introduction of the Brahmi script as prehistoric, and paintings which were done later as historic. Protohistoric in the Indian context denotes a period when a script is known, but is not readable, and further it also denotes a period of which we have information through supposedly oral sources which were written down only later in the historic period.
For this reason the term "protohistoric" is a synonym for the Harappan Culture and the period preceding the Mauryan empire. "Protohistoric" or "chalcolithic" are terms generally used for those rock pictures which have strong stylistic and thematic similarities with the pottery designs from the chalcolithic period.
The stylistic and formal analogies between the rock pictures of the agriculturists and cattle-keepers and the designs on the pottery of the neolithic/chalcolithic culture complex are obvious enough to give a fairly well demarcated time frame between 2 500 B.C. and 200 B.C. for these rock pictures.

We are left with the earliest rock pictures, which only show people in a foraging stage with no indication of animal domestication nor any trace of agriculture. These pictures show clearly that these hunting and gathering groups fashioned microlith-barbed weapons, like spears and arrows. Although there is no good argument against a mesolithic date for these pictures, it has to be kept in mind, that the mesolithic period in India stretches over a very long time span. Although its termination coincides in many regions with the beginnings of agriculture and domestication of animals, we do not know what brought the change about.
However, the early paintings of the hunters and gatherers already show a developed microlith technology, a feature which goes back in India right to the upperpalaeolithic period. According to

the microlith technology shown in these paintings, they could be as old as 25 000 years or only 5 000 years. Indeed there are archaeological indications that some of the earliest paintings might have been done during the upperpalaeolithic period. But here rock-art research touches a problem which can only be solved by further archaeological investigation

Microlithic tool assemblages which are labelled as "upperpalaeolithic" are in many cases quite similar to those identified as belonging to the mesolithic period. In many cases the difference is only expressed in the percentages of geometric microlith types in the respective assemblages. And sometimes similar assemblages are attributed to the upperpalaeolithic or the mesolithic period on account of their absolute dates.

Wakankar was of the opinion that upperpalaeolithic assemblages had a lower percentage of geometric microlith-types than the later mesolithic assemblages.
Since he found faceted green colour nodules in microlith-bearing strata, which --he claimed-- had also a low percentage of geometric types, he was of the opinion that green paintings were fashioned during the upperpalaeolithic period.

Dateable finds of carved or engraved artifacts from archaeological strata are lacking in India. These would enable a comparison between design patterns on such artifacts and a particular rock picture style.

Up till now only very few finds of designed artifacts have been lifted in controlled archaeological excavations from upperpalaeolithic or mesolithic strata in India.

One "anthropomorph" bone artefact was found in the upperpalaeolithic sediments from Lohanda Nulla, a tributary of the Belan River in the Mirzapur District of Uttar Pradesh (Fig.: 13), (IAR.: 1970/71:Pl LIX,B; Misra,V.D.: 1977:49). This bone artefact, labelled "Mother Goddess" by some (Sankalia,H.D., 1987:9,Fig: 4-5), and "harpoon" by others (Gupta,S.P., 1979/80:116), does not allow any useful stylistic comparison with anthropomorphs in rock paintings, but it shows that carving of bone material was well developed during the upperpalaeolithic period in India.
The strata in which this artefact was imbedded could be dated to 25 000 B.P. on account of the accompanying fresh-water shells (Misra,V.D., 1977:49).

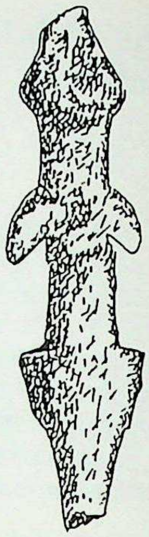


Fig.: ***13:*** *Lohanda Nulla*

10 cm

A further find of early applied art comes from Patne in Maharashtra. During an excavation, several pieces of engraved, trimmed and bored ostrich egg-shell pieces were found in the upperpalaeolithic levels (Fig.: 14), (Sali,S.A., 1984:112-9). These levels could be dated to 25 000 B.P. The design patterns on the shell-pieces consist of two parallel lines with simple cross-hatching in between.

Fig.: ***14:*** *Patne*

1 cm

The simplicity of the design makes a comparison with design patterns from rock-art useless, since such simple patterns were used frequently in all available stylistic periods, be it prehistoric, protohistoric, or historic proper.
Although here the stylistic correlations are oblivious, the find shows that applied art was very much a cultural entity during this early period.

What is more interesting and revealing is that these engravings appear on the egg-shell material of a now extinct bird. The fact that the ostrich was living in India itself came as a surprise to Indian prehistorians, as no such material was found in earlier excavations. Although Archibald Carllyle has found pieces of ostrich eggs more than 100 years ago during his explorations in the Banda District of Uttar Pradesh (Andrews,C.W., 1910:173; Bidwell,E. & Pycraft,W.P., 1904/5:72-3), no skeletal material of this impressive bird was ever identified in an archaeological context in India.
After the identification of the ostrich egg-shells from Patne, a large number of egg-shell pieces were found in different places of Central India and the Deccan (Kumar,G., 1988:43-9).
From an archaeological context only two more minute beads were found in the neck region of a skeleton in a burial from Bhimbetka, which was excavated by Wakankar. Most unfortunately, no absolute dates are available for this burial.

From time to time large birds depicted in rock pictures were identified as ostriches, curiously even before it was commonly known that ostriches existed in India at all (Gupta,J., 1967: 206, pl. XX-2). None of these depicted birds could be identified beyond doubt as ostriches (Neumayer,E., 1990: 25-8). For these reasons I find it appropriate to presume, that stone age man in Patne and Bhimbetka used fossilized egg-shell material for fashioning beads and other artefacts, and the early dates which were derived from some of the egg-shell samples give only the age of the material, but not the age of their usage.

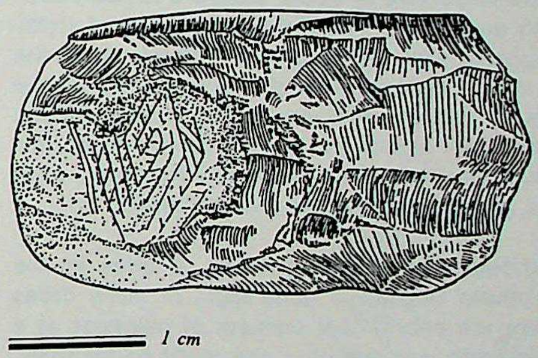
Another artefact of considerable importance is an engraved chalcedony blade core, which was found near Chandravati in the Sirohi District of Rajasthan in a mesolithic surface assemblage (Fig.: 15),(Sonavane,V.H., 1984:61-3).
Into the opaline silica-cortex, on the unscarred side of the core, a rhombus-type spiral design was cut in extremely fine and delicate lines. These lines must have been fashioned with the help of a microlithic blade.

On account of the particular design pattern, a stylistic comparison with similar design patterns from mesolithic rock pictures is possible.

Unfortunately this core was a surface find, and no exact chronological date is available, although the nature of the assemblage is clearly mesolithic.

Intricate designs of rhomboid design patterns as well as honeycomb designs and variations of the general theme "spiral" are almost a "trade mark" of the early rock-art of the hunters and gatherers in India.

Fig.: ***15****: Chandravati*



We are left with tens of thousands of pictures telling us most vividly about facets of the cultural environment in which they flourished, but providing, till now, no further indications leading to a closer chronology. No extinct animal is shown in the pictures, or could yet be identified, nor did any piece of transportable art surface, which would allow a useful comparison of design patterns or other features.
All that we are left with are a few examples of applied art, dateable to more than 20 000 years B.P.

The clear depiction of tools set with microliths indicates that the pictures originate from the period, when this type of tools was in use. Since microlith technology was current in Central India from the late upperpalaeolithic period through the long span of the mesolithic period, --till it was replaced by metal weapons during the protohistoric period--this furnishes a time frame for the origin of the earliest pictures. This time frame stretches from about 25 000 to 5 000 B.P., which is too long a span of time to be of absolute-chronological relevance. Even then, for convenience sake, I will refer to these pictures of the hunters and gatherers as "mesolithic pictures."

The chronological framework for the rock pictures in South India is based on the results from the studies of successive styles in Central India. Nowhere in South India are rock-art sites rich enough, to verify the succession of styles minutely. Only at the site of Chintakunta in the Cuddaph district of Andhra Pradesh are all the South Indian rock-art styles and stylistic variations available. The southern mesolithic paintings are in most cases only fragments from the original paintings or painted panels.

Although the overall number of sites in the Southern Deccan is quite high, in many cases there are only a few pockets of paintings at a single site, and the next site might be far apart. The information we can gather from these pictures is meager, compared to the sites in the Vindhya Region.

Given these drawbacks, the South Indian rock-art material was hardly considered suitable for an exacting study till recently. A better picture of stylistic successions and stylistic variations of the rock pictures of the Southern Deccan is slowly emerging.

The mesolithic pictures in South India can be divided into two successive and distinct stylistic groups. The earlier is known from a few paintings in well protected pockets in Alampadi (Figs.: 309,347), Padyandal and Settavarai (Figs.: 287,304-5,308) in the South Arcot District of Tamil Nadu, in Velary Kombay (Figs.: 9,270,307,328-32) in the Nilgiri District of the same state, and in Chintakunta in the Cuddapah District of Andhra Pradesh, and in Badami (Figs.: 8,16,113-5), in the Bijapur District of Karnataka (Neumayer,E., 1983:157-8; Sundera,A., 1984:137-48).

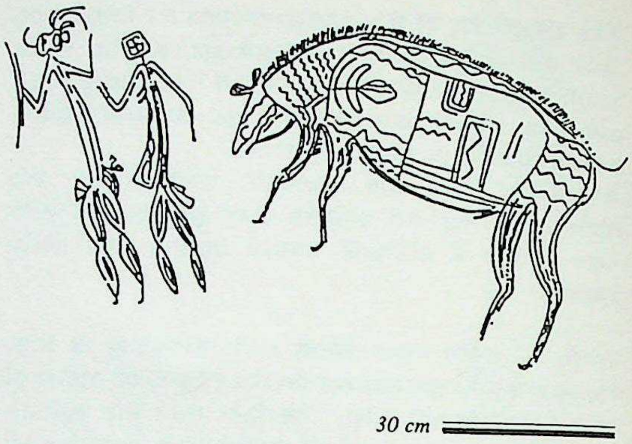
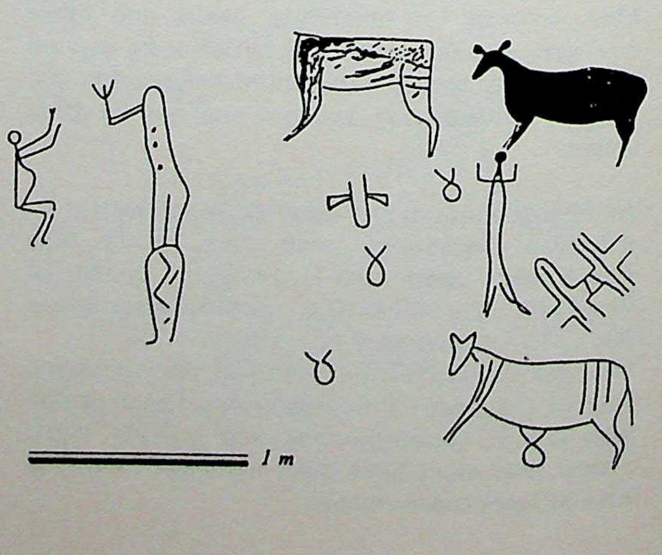


Fig.: ***16****: Badami - Hiregudda*

The later mesolithic stylistic group is found almost at all rock-art sites of the Southern Deccan (Figs.: 17,287-300).

While the earlier pictures conform perfectly to the stylistic criteria observed in the mesolithic art of the Vindhya Region, the paintings of the later style show considerable stylistic variations. Figures of animals are drawn mostly in large sizes, quite often more than life-size, always stiff and plump. Human figures are conspicuously rare, and the few exceptions come mostly from sites in the Benakal Region, from sites near Humpi and from Korugodu in the Bellary District. Some examples were also found at the site of Ketavaram in the Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh (Figs.: 17,335-6,349).

Fig.: ***17****: Hampi - Venkatapura*



The chronological horizon for these paintings is difficult to draw. These pictures do not show any domesticated animals, nor indicate any technological innovation like wheeled transport or the riding of animals, which would hint at the knowledge of agriculture.

The difference between the late mesolithic paintings and the earlier paintings of the cattle-keepers and agriculturists is dramatic. The stylistic break is quite obvious, as it is in Central India as well. Only while there a very dynamic art of the hunters and gatherers gets replaced by a progressively stiff and static art of the agriculturists and cattle-keepers, here the stiff and static later art of the hunters and gatherers get replaced by the very stylish art of the early cattle-keepers, whose thematic spectrum is extremely limited and almost confined to the depiction of humped, long-horned cattle (Figs.: 18,463-7).

Another region, where stylistic trends in the pictures of the hunters and gatherers are at variance with the general observation in the Central Vindhya Region, exists at the northern fringe of the Vindhya Hills, in the Mirzapur District of Uttar Pradesh (Figs.: 1,98,123,126,181,230,236-57). The variation does not apply to the thematic spectrum, but rather to the stylistic and conventional features of the depiction of certain activities.
The paintings show all the thematic features expected from paintings of foraging people, hunting and fishing, and also keep to the thematic limitations: no depiction of domesticated animals, no horse-riders, etc. But animals as well as humans are projected very much like we know them from the chalcolithic paintings in Malwa.
It might be that very early, this region, at the fringe of the Gangetic Plains, was the centre of a progressively changing economic and social environment. This is also indicated by the material excavated in mesolithic settlement sites in the Son Valley. Transformation towards a settled life-style of foraging groups seems to have taken place much earlier here than in other parts of the Indian subcontinent (Sharma,G.R.[Ed.], 1980). The paintings of the hunters and gatherers in this region may document just that.

The stylistic difference between the paintings of the hunters and gatherers and those of the agriculturists and cattle-keepers in the Vindhya Region are obvious. If the pictures of the hunters and gatherers are dynamic and full of narrative qualities, the pictures of the agriculturists and animal-breeders are stiff and stereotyped.
Although the weapon inventory of the latter still show clearly the application of microliths on spears and arrows (Fig.: 377), the appearance of metal arrow-heads and spears, as well as the metal axes (Figs.: 20,369,375,378-85) herald a fast-changing technology. Common is also the depiction of domesticated cattle (Figs.: 18-20,361-75).
The complexity of the available technology is best represented by depictions of the chariots, manned by warriors and charioteers (Figs.: 20,408-30). Procession scenes with hierarchic elevated personalities, heroes or gods indicate an advanced state of social stratification.
Agriculture --the economic foundation of this period-- is hardly ever shown in the paintings. I know of only two sites --Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla and Lakhajoar-- where paintings of ploughing persons were found (Fig.: 370).

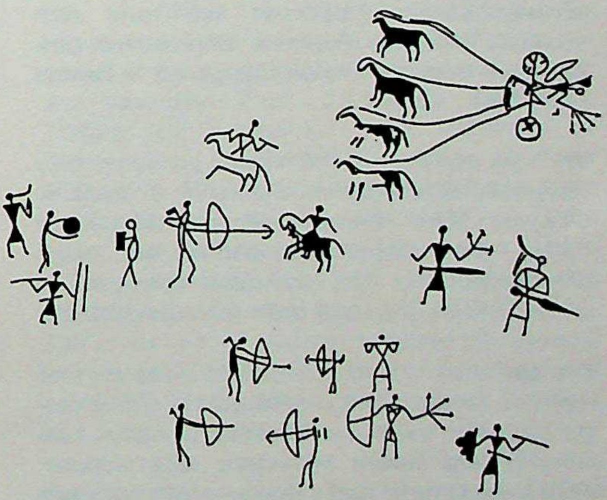


*Fig.: **18:** Firengi* 20 cm

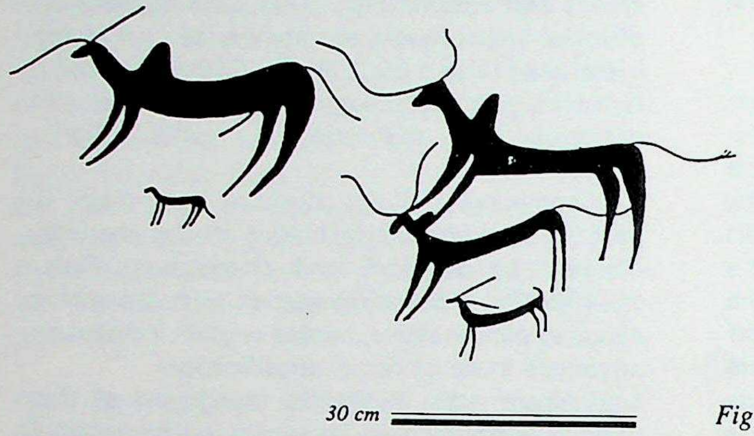


Fig.: ***19****(from Fig.:464): Piklihal*

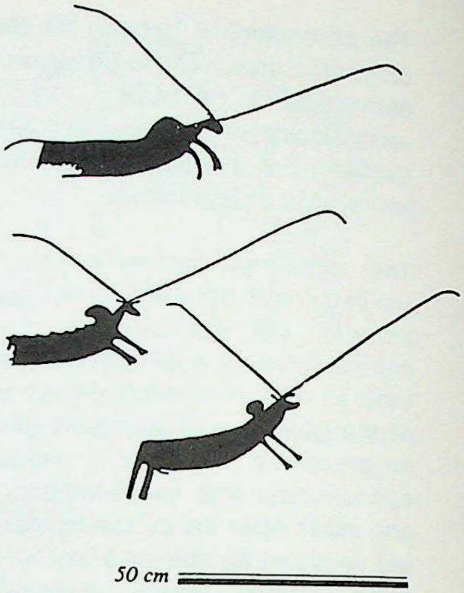


Fig.: ***20****: Kharwai*

The stylistic uniformity of the pictures of the early agriculturists and animal-keepers over the whole of the Indian subcontinent is so pronounced, that there seems to be almost no stylistic variation between the early rock bruisings from the Southern Deccan and rock paintings from the chalcolithic period in Central India (Figs.: 18-9).

The rock paintings of the historic period are only marginally different from the earlier chalcolithic pictures. Many thematic entities introduced during the chalcolithic period are more pronounced, but the transformation can be understood as a gradual shift towards particular themes.
The depiction of microlith-barbed weapons was replaced by those with metal points. Chariots -- although rare even in chalcolithic paintings-- are more or less absent in historic rock pictures, while depictions of horse-riders, which were rare in the chalcolithic art, become the standard theme of the historic rock-art (Figs.: 20,422,441-6,495-502).

The finds of painted or engraved inscriptions in Asokan-Brahmi and later styles of this script at rock-art sites give a clear time frame for many paintings from the last quarter of the first millennium B.C. onwards (Figs.: 21,524-7,539, 544,545-6,548), besides indicating important links in the religious use of rock-art sites.

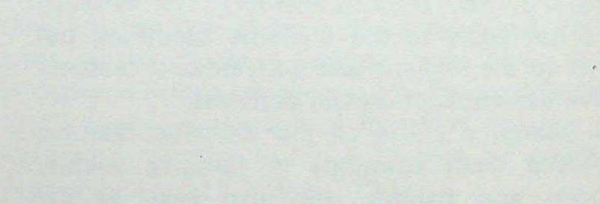


Fig.: ***21****: Chiklod*

Hermitages founded in rock shelters, brought about an exchange between the ancient folk idiom, in which the rock pictures were done since time immemorial, and stylistic trends and art concepts which were evolved in the urban setting.

It is not surprising therefore, that pictures of new stylistic conventions appear on and off, showing symbols and paraphernalia of the Buddhist creed as well as images of the Bhakta religion. Some of these images must be considered as the oldest extant paintings of Indian gods, still central to the Hindu religion.

Chronologically the most important painted images are those of Krishna and Balarama, which were found near the village of Tikula in the Gwalior District of Madhya Pradesh.

The gods hold the well known paraphernalia of plough and discus in their hands (Fig.: 22) and are depicted beneath an umbrella of honour, held by a third person. An Asokan-Brahmi inscription, belonging to the first or second century B.C. gives the name of the person who has drawn this painting as Dambuka.

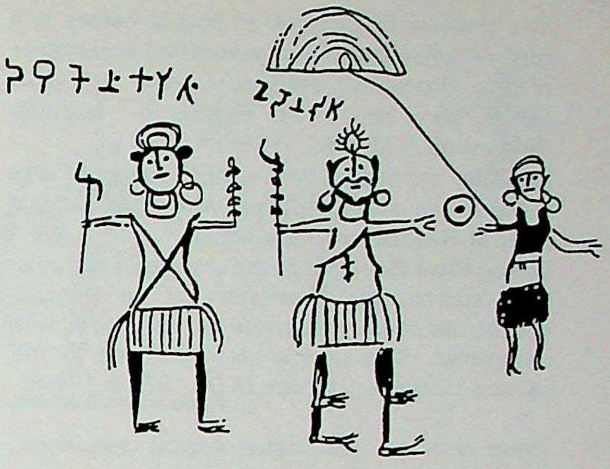


*Fig.:**22**: Tikula*

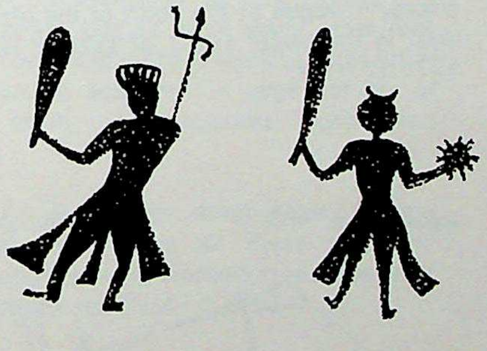


*Fig.:**23**: Chilas*

The icons of the Bhakta-gods Samkarsana (Balarama) and Vasudeva (Krishna) were also noticed in rock engravings at a site close to the city of Chilas in northern Pakistan. The engravings there are even inscribed with the names of the gods in Koroshti-script as Baladebo and Vasudebo (Figs.: 23,547-8), (Dani,A.H., 1983:pl. 80; Jettmar,K., 1984; Jettmar,K. & Thewalt,V., 1985:16). The dating of these images to the second century B.C. is quite convincing, after the discovery of six Indo-Greek coins from Ai Khanoum in Afghanistan. These coins were issued by the Indo-Greek king Agathocles, who ruled from 180 till 170 B.C.

The coins are of square, irregular shape, well known from the early Indian punch-marked coins. The bilingual inscription in Greek language and script and in Prakrit and Asokan-Brahmi script, tells on the obverse "Basileos Agathocleos" and on the reverse in Brahmi "Rajine Agathuklayesa" (Fig.: 546), (Audoin,R. & Bernard,P., 1974:7-41). The obverse shows a picture of Balaram holding up a plough in one hand and a club in the other, while Krishna is shown at the reverse side, holding a spoke-wheel with protruding arrows in one hand, and a vase(?) in the other. Both gods are shown with umbrella above the head.

For all these iconographic parallels the rock picture from Tikula can be safely dated to the second century B.C.

The findings of pictures of Bhakta heroes is a further indication of the widespread acceptance of the Bhagavata religion, whose traditional centre has been --as it still is-- Mathura (Srinivasan,D.M.[Ed.], 1989).
Another important centre of Vishnuism was Vidisha, the ancient Bhilsa, where the famous pillar of Heliodorus was erected.
During the excavation of the site where the pillar now stands, the foundation of an elliptical temple, obviously dedicated to Vasudeva, was uncovered. This temple also belonged to the second century B.C. (Khare,M.D., 1975-6:176-8).

These finds are clear archaeological indications, that a widely accepted, uniform imagery was current in India during the early historic period. The appearance of these icons in rock-art indicates the depth of penetration of codified and uniform systems of religious beliefs and images

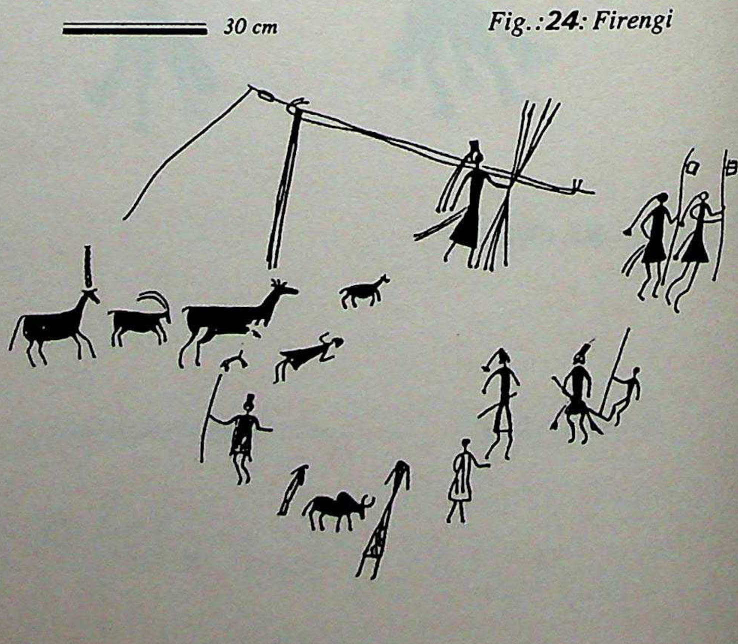
Besides these deities from the Bhagavata religion, there are also a number of Buddhist symbols like *Stupa* (Figs.: 3,551-5), *Dharmacakra* on a pillar (Fig.: 12,548), and the *Triratna* symbol, which can also be brought into considerably exact time-brackets by accompanying or overlapping inscriptions in the different styles of scripts. Later even multi-armed gods and goddesses appear, which present all the paraphernalia of the Hindu iconography (Fig.: 557).
The great mass of the rock pictures, however, are confined to their age-old codex of stylistic features, whose variations are mere ripples in the vast ocean of the folk idiom, of which rock-art is the most potent surviving remnant.

There are some outstanding stylistic groups in the rock-art of the historic period, which should not be overlooked in a cavalier fashion, as they form in many respects a qualitative breakaway from well-cherished traditions, showing tendencies and influences which might be important once they can be correlated with other historical facts in this vast amount of folk art which exists generally outside the reaches of strict historical investigation.

In the region around Bhopal there flourished a rock-art style of considerable artistic merit, which, above all, is defined by its extremely fine and vivid depictions of animals, domesticated as well as wild (Figs.: 24,590-604).
The chronological position of this style is well defined by an engraved Asokan-Brahmi inscription overlaid by the figure of a cow in this style. Gupta-Brahmi inscriptions related to such paintings furnish us with the second bracket in time between the 1st century B.C. and the 4th century A.D.

The persons depicted in these paintings are shown dressed in kaftan-like clothes, and sometimes seem to wear loose pantaloons. The men sport fez-like caps, which are decorated with long tassels. Tassels as design elements also appear as part of their adornment as well as on weapons (Figs.: 24,582-4,605-6).
These "Central Asian" modes of dress are in several details comparable to the dresses shown in Kushana art. It was for these reasons that Wakankar and I labelled this style as "Kushana-style".
I do not know how these stylistic peculiarities were brought about. It is possible that in the aftermath of the downfall of the Maurya empire, pastoral tribes from North West India moved into parts of the hilly tracts of Central India.
That of course does not explain how and why these immigrants should continue the rock-art tradition at the very same spots where rock-art was fashioned since time immemorial.
Kaftan-like coats as well as the typical Central Asian felt caps are depicted in early Buddhist sculptures, where persons wearing these were generally identified as "foreigners", which might not be correct in every case, since it is quite well documented that Persian dress modes were already in vogue at the court of the Mauryas at least in the upper strata of society (Ayyar,S., 1976:107-17).

*Fig.:**24**: Firengi*



Already in the second half of the first millennium A.D. the quality as well as the repertoire of the rock-art in the Vindhyas diminished considerably. Inscriptions in Shank character became common. The style of rock paintings produced during this period is very similar to the style of house wall pictures which are still done in rural Central India (Figs.: 563-6,708-12).

Within the body of the "historic" rock pictures, the paintings in the Mahadeo Hills occupy an exceptional position.
Stylistically they are comparable in many details to the "Kushana" paintings, but their thematic spectrum is far superior. Some of the paintings in the Mahadeo Hills have to be counted as masterpieces of early Indian art (Figs.: 25,615-43,630-91).
It seems that the rock painters in the Mahadeo Hills could draw from a much larger repertoire of narrative possibilities than the rock painters in other regions at the same period.
The chronological placing of these paintings is to some extent hampered by the relatively small number of about 100 known shelters, compared to the many thousands of pictures from this period available in the Vindhya Region.
The technological details in the paintings of the Mahadeo Hills show clear similarities to features appearing in early historic paintings elsewhere in Central India. These pictures represent many aspects of the life-styles of agriculturists and animal-keepers, but as in so many other rock paintings they hardly touch upon the subject of food producing activities. A large number of pictures seem to document fights and skirmishes.

The technological details, which allow a general chronological placement of these paintings, show, amongst others, warriors in heavy armour mounted on horses (Figs.: 620,624).

D.H.Gordon had already drawn chronological conclusions from the comparison between adornments and hairstyles shown in these paintings and sculptural art in medieval temples (Gordon,M.E. & Gordon,D.H., 1939:19). But these comparisons with classical Indian art should not obscure stylistic analogies with other art remains, comparison with which seems much more relevant in this context. Here I wish to draw attention to analogies between these paintings and reliefs on "Hero-stones" which are found so frequently in the Southern Deccan, particularly in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra. The practice of erecting death memorials with carvings in stone goes back to the earlier half of the first millennium A.D. Hero stones are particularly numerous from the tenth century onwards.
The reliefs on these stones show, in codified and narrative sequences, scenes from the life and death of the honoured persons.

However, the historic paintings in the Mahadeo Hills show the life-style of people, who were well acquainted with the technology current during the first millennium A.D.

Without further archaeological investigation it is impossible to tell whether the skirmishes between warriors with heavy weapons like sword, battleaxe and even protective armour and other who are equipped with bows and arrows only, represent encounters between armies belonging to centralized powers, which by then had brought most tracts of the river valleys under their order, and hill-tribe fighters, who challenged these powers from their hilly retreats.

The rock paintings in the Mahadeo Hills are important remains of early historic art in India, which up till now had gone unrecognized in art history. They are important documents of historic processes in a cultural environment, which otherwise had left no traces for the understanding of the formative period of tribes and communities in these rather backward parts of India.

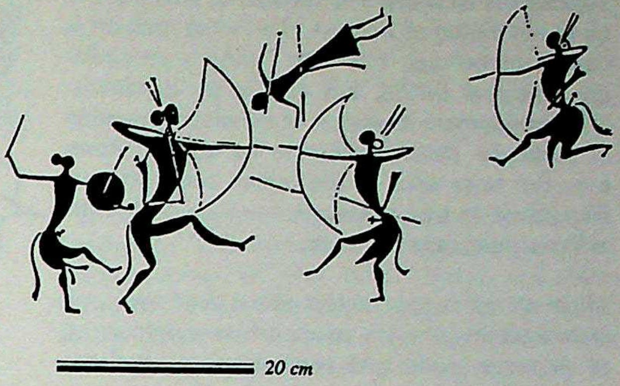


Fig.:25: Mahadeo Hills - Mahadeo Pahar

Besides the local stylistic variations, which are to be found during all periods, the Indian rock-art is very homogenous, not only during a particular chronological period, but also in its dynamics. The development of styles, or the discontinuation of particular themes seem to be quite uniform over the huge area of the Indian subcontinent. Exceptions to this observation will be dealt with in the subsequent chapters.

Although not as spectacular as the large narrative picture groups, there is an important undercurrent of abstract signs and symbols in all stylistic groups of rock-art.

Some isolated rock picture groups, which were found only recently in the eastern parts of India, indicate that there were different iconographic streams, which, on account of limited research and scarcity of material from these sites have not yet been properly understood.

One of these sites is Bainete Banda in the Kammam District of Andhra Pradesh.

There, at a quartzite cliff, are engravings of animal footprints, some filled in red colour. The earliest engravings show mainly hoof prints of cervids and bovids as well as prints of paws of panthers and tigers, and in a few cases engravings of human hands and feet (Figs.: 26-30,350-60). In between these footprints are also engraved figures of animals, which at times are filled in with pigments and sometimes enlarged by pigment paintings. The species of these animals are not identifiable. On the same rock walls are paintings of grouped signs and symbols, which at times are reminiscent of anthropomorphs.

*Fig.:**26**: Bainete Banda*
*Fig.:**27**: Bainete Banda*
*Fig.:**28**: Bainete Banda*
*Fig.:**29**: Bainete Banda*

*Fig.:**26***

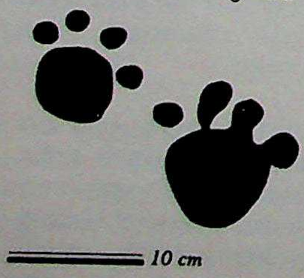


*Fig.:**27***

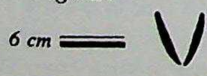


*Fig.:**28***

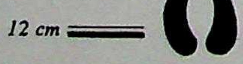
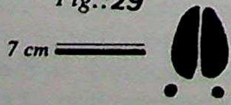


*Fig.:**29***



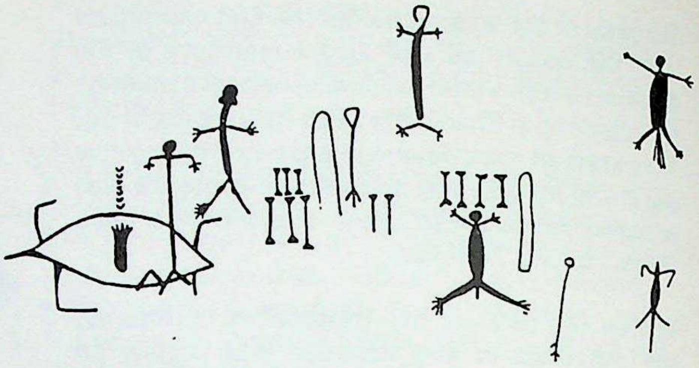


*Fig.:**30**: Bainete Banda*

A few later paintings are in the same narrative style as is known so well from early historic paintings, showing humped cattle and schematic anthropomorphs.

Some of the engraved zoomorphs as well as rhomboidal and spiral designs hint towards a stylistic closeness to mesolithic rock-art elsewhere, in particular towards the later rock-art style of the art of the hunters and gatherers in the Southern Deccan.

Engravings done in a similar technique --partly filled in with red pigment-- but of a quite different style, were found at sites in the Sambalpur and Sundergarh Districts of Orissa (Figs.: 31,258-68).

The earliest notices of these engravings from the Vikramkhol rock shelter go back to the twenties of this century. The following discussion centres mainly around the question whether these pictures were a kind of writing or not. (Chakravarti,N.P., 1936:229; Jayaswal,K.P., 1933:58-60; Fabri,C.L., 1936:230,Pl. CXIXa, 1934:51-6).

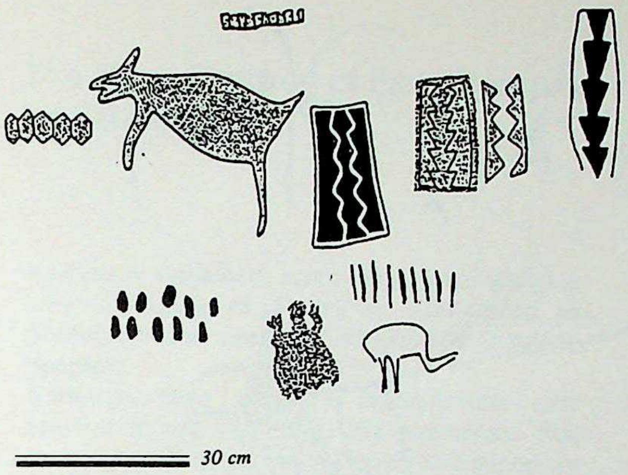


*Fig.:**31**(from Fig.:258): Chhenga Pahar-Lakhamara*

Now after the discovery of so many more engravings in Orissa, it is quite clear that these pictures are definitely not remains of an early script. Stylistic features, like the rhomboidal and spiral designs, form an obvious stylistic link with mesolithic paintings in Central India.

In Bainete Banda as well as on the picture walls in the Sambalpur and Sundargarh Districts these engravings and paintings precede pictures showing humped cattle and anthropomorphs, in a style similar to so many pictures of the chalcolithic and early historic period.
At this stage of research in the eastern parts of India, we have to conclude that some different stylistic traits were current. But all conclusions on style and chronology of the pictures have to be considered as preliminary, since large parts of these regions are virtually unexplored from the archaeological point of view. The few notices of rock-art from Bengal and further east from Manipur are promising, and indicate that finds of rock-art here are likely as soon as prehistoric research in these areas is intensified (IAR 1982/3:104; 1983/4:59,60).

The chronology of the rock engravings in the Karakoram and Himalayas, particularly at the upper course of the River Indus and her tributaries in Ladakh and Zanskar is to some extent easier to interpret. It is quite clear that these pictures do not belong to a single epoch, but are --like most rock-art in India-- an aggregation of different styles and themes, belonging to different cultural phases of people living and visiting this exceedingly beautiful, but also difficult terrain.

Some of the engravings show hunters with bows and arrows stalking ibex, deer and bovids. These compare well with engravings from a neolithic stele found in one of the subterranean houses in Burzahom in the Kashmir Valley, showing the hunting of a deer by two persons --one armed with a spear, the other with bow and arrow-- and a dog (Fig.: 32-3), (IAR 1965/6:19,Pl. IX-X; Pande,B.M., 1969:134-8).

Close to the Indus crossing near Alchi are several engravings, showing typical features of the "Euro-Asiatic Animal style." Similar depictions were found further down the river, close to the city of Chilas (Jettmar,K. & Thewalt,V., 1985:14; Jettmar,K., 1980:216-218; Dani,A.H., 1983), where the chronological order of the engravings could be clarified, since besides these engravings of animals, persons and religious symbols, there are also inscriptions in Koroshti, Brahmi and Chinese. These inscriptions were engraved by pilgrims and traders, who braved the high mountain-passes of the "silk-road" from Ghandar towards Sinkiang.

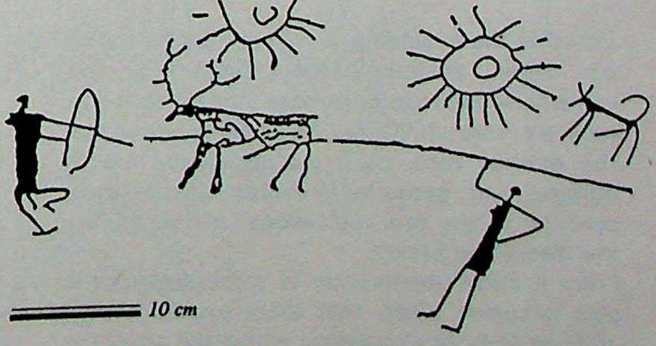


*Fig.:**32**: Burzahom*

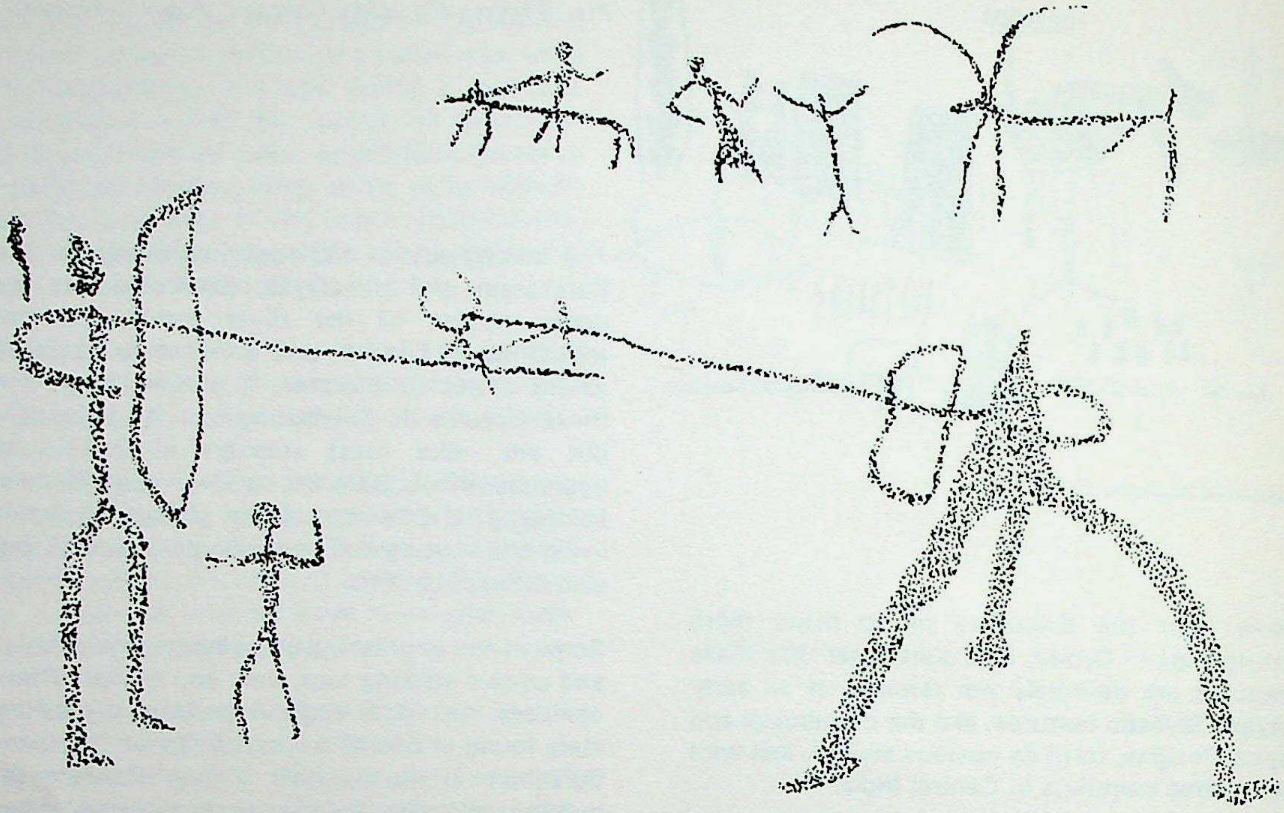


*Fig.:**33**: Ladakh - Nurla*

The dating of Indian rock pictures is to some extent supported by a chronological framework, which is based on the observation of overlapping and overpainting of successive rock pictures belonging to different stylistic groups. The periodization is further based on the thematic analysis of the pictures, showing patterns of subsistence, tool technology and technological innovations, as for example the use of microlithic tools, the introduction of metal weapons or the use of chariots, which give us indications as to the general period when these pictures could have been done.

Whether the beginning of rock-art can be traced by new archaeological finds to the upperpalaeolithic is of utmost interest to Indian rock-art research. Today we can only prove that the earliest rock paintings depict the life of hunting and gathering peoples, whose tools conform to the tool technology current during the mesolithic period.
From a close observation of these paintings it also becomes clear, that there existed a very uniform code of expression within the art of the foraging peoples in the Indian subcontinent. One of the obvious features of this code was the narrative sequences of action, which is a central feature of all later rock-art in India and has remained an integral factor in Indian art tradition, be it classical, folk or tribal.

We know from modern examples that an evidently self-explanatory narrative sequence in a piece of art can have an abundance of metaphysical concepts, which at times can even become a travesty of the depicted figures. Very often it is explained, that such sequences are organized as they are for the purpose of communicating with persons at different levels of initiation into a given set of ideas.
In the absence of verbal or literary explanation it is impossible either to prove or disprove a similar stratification of meaning in the prehistoric paintings.
Although speculation is possible about a deeper symbolism in these paintings, I shall refrain from further enlarging on these ideas in the absence of an adequate basis for the analysis of the possible evidence.

The Rock Pictures of Early Hunters and Gatherers

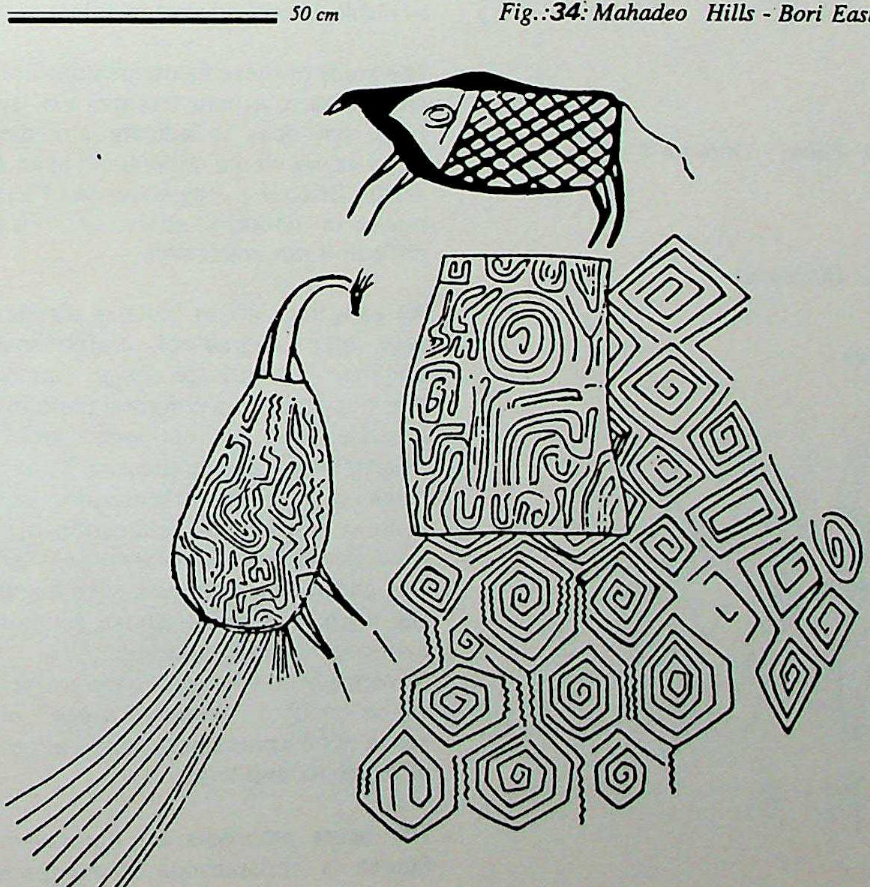
As already explained, I consider pictures showing only foraging as a way of subsistence as products of the stone age hunting and gathering peoples.

Although their absolute chronological time bracket is not yet clear, the indications that many of them belong to the mesolithic period are convincing to me. Indications that the earliest of these pictures may go back to the upperpalaeolithic can neither be proved nor disproved yet. The reason for this is that the criteria for the "upperpalaeolithic" in India are not yet clearly defined. For this art we are left with time brackets from 25 000 B.P. to 5 000 B.P.

An antiquity of more than 20 000 years is suggested by the finds of applied art from upperpalaeolithic levels (Figs.: 13,15). All these finds do not allow a stylistic comparison with a particular rock-art style.

The intricately engraved rhomboid-spiral design on a microlithic blade core from Chandravati (Fig.: 14) was a surface find, which did not furnish any absolute date. Still, this find is important, since these intricate designs are a typical feature of the art of the early hunters and gatherers in India (Figs.: 8,34-7,52,78,95-6,105, 109-16,201,117-20,161-2,177,183,186,188, 222,226), but absent from the later art of the agriculturists and cattle-keepers.

Fig.: 34: Mahadeo Hills - Bori East



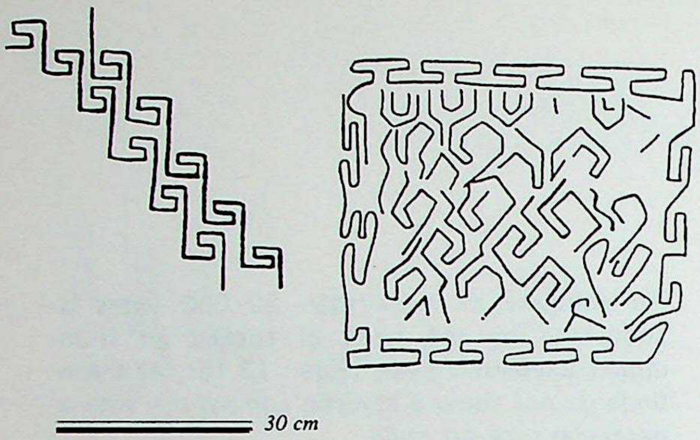


*Fig.:***35***: Cable Nagar*

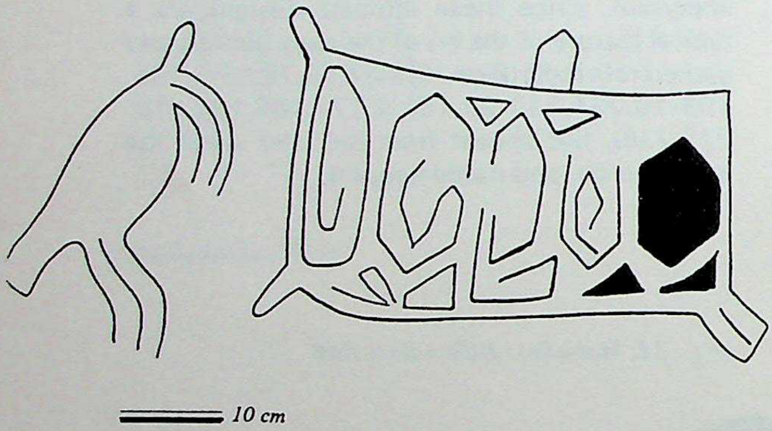
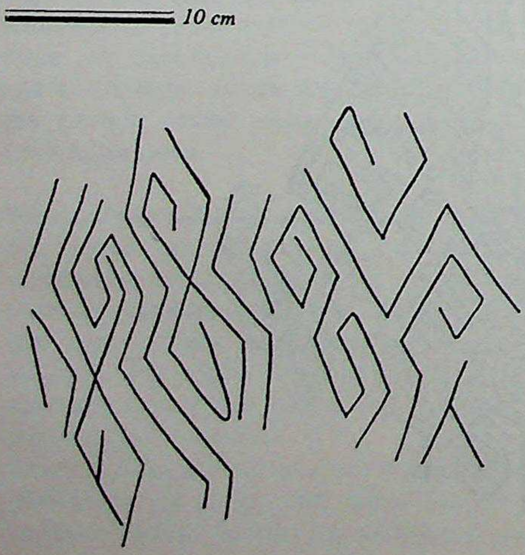


*Fig.:***36***: Chhenga Pahar - Chichiria Khol*

*Fig.:***37***: Badami - Hiregudda*



The search for the origins of rock-art in India is the search for the origins of art as a whole. The earliest rock pictures show a strictly codified repertoire in regard to style and use of space, which clearly shows that they were part of a widely understood communication system. The oldest pictures are distinguished by the quality of the application of the pigment in very fine and controlled lines, which suggests that designs were applied on other surfaces and in different media as well.

The pictures of the hunters and gatherers encompass several stylistic variants which are more or less distinct.
The earliest pictures are often done in red, green and yellow pigments (Figs.: 38-9,41-2,47,54-64, 76-7,81-6,89,91-2,96,101-2,109-10,201, 206,121-2,163-6,168,180,182,185,215-6, 225,233). Very few paintings of this style have actually survived; most often they are obscured by successive, overlaying pictures, sometimes in the same style but more often in an aggregation of later styles.
A thorough knowledge of many rock-art sites is necessary to analyse the thematic content of these subtle pictures. From such an analysis it becomes clear, that most themes dealt with in the pictures of the hunters and gatherers are available already in these earliest paintings.

The study of these paintings does not furnish any answer as to where this pictorial system came from, nor does it indicate any developmental stage as we would understand in an evolutionary sense. Of course, the absence of absolute dates makes a rigorous study of these questions difficult if not impossible.

All early rock-art in India is distinguished by a very high degree of craftsmanship and a uniformity of intricate design patterns. I believe that this stylistic and formal uniformity was only possible through a long and continuous development, encompassing the ideological make-up of prehistoric hunting and gathering cultures on the Indian subcontinent.
How the earliest representations of "art" look like, and in which remains we are actually able to see them, is a riddle whose solution lies in our own cognitive perception.
Nowhere at the known rock-art sites exists an indication of a "primitive stage" of art in the sense of non-proficiency in the act of application of pigments and lines.

The acute emphasis on naturalism of animal figures is conspicuous in comparison to the

extreme minimalization of the human figures in the paintings of the earliest stylistic group (Figs.:41-50,78-88,105,194-9,203-5,208, 121-2,144, 167-173, 179,184,190-1,215,232, 238-44,254,269-71).
A further dichotomy exists in the depictions of male and female figures. While women are drawn as quite bulky, men are reduced to stick figures. It has to be mentioned that depictions of females are extremely rare among the earliest paintings.

The dichotomy in the depiction between man and woman is not confined to the very first stylistic group but continues throughout the art of the hunters and gatherers (Figs.: 105,122,138,151, 153,162,174,179,183-4,190-1,694).

The "minimalized" human figures of the earliest pictures are shown in two different versions. In one their bodies are drawn in a typical "S-shape" fashion, in which the anthropomorph figures seem to be the embodiment of movement. The figures are shown as dancing, running or jumping (Figs.: 38,41-2,55-62,81-6,121-2).
The second convention shows the human figures in a stiff manner, often draped with heavy adornment, headgears and other embellishments (Figs.: 39,54,63,80,92,164,167-8,185,191, 202-3,225).

Fig.: ***38:*** *Lakhajoar*

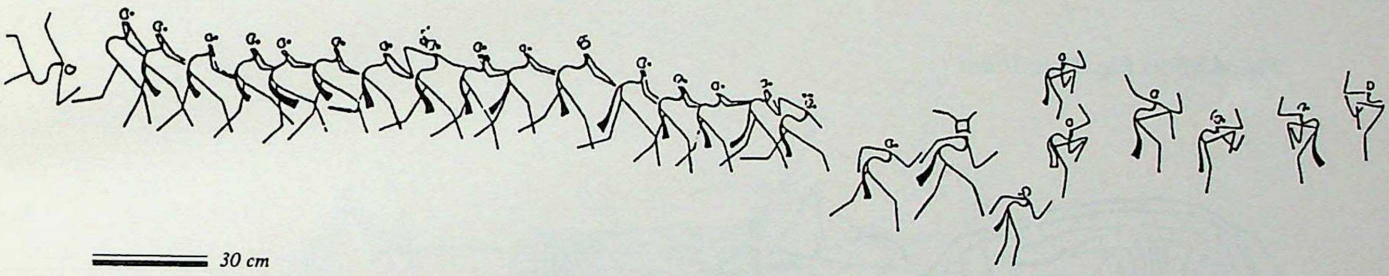
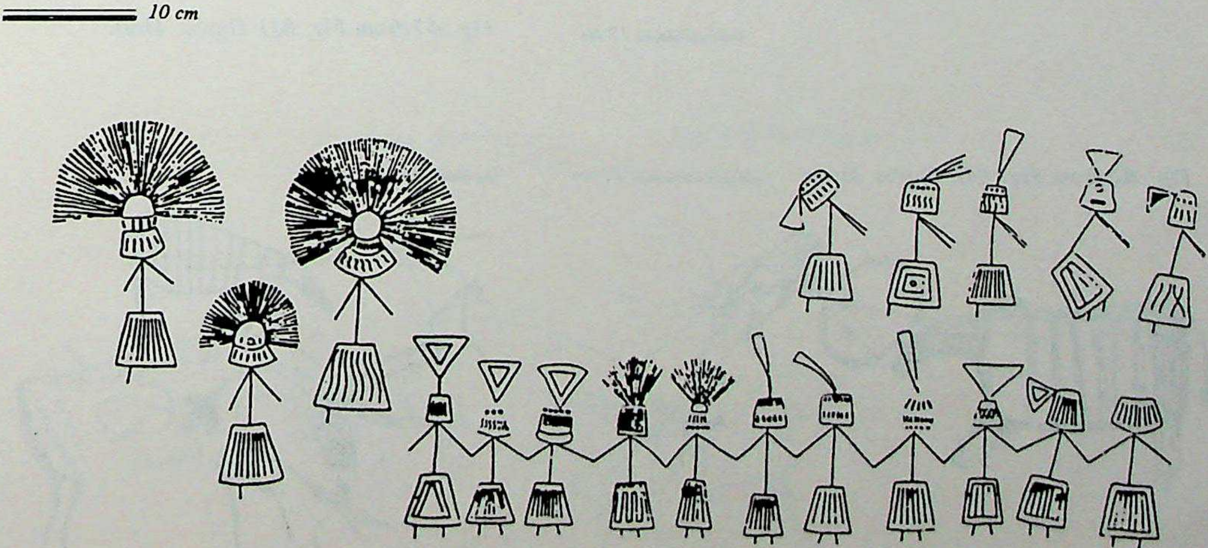
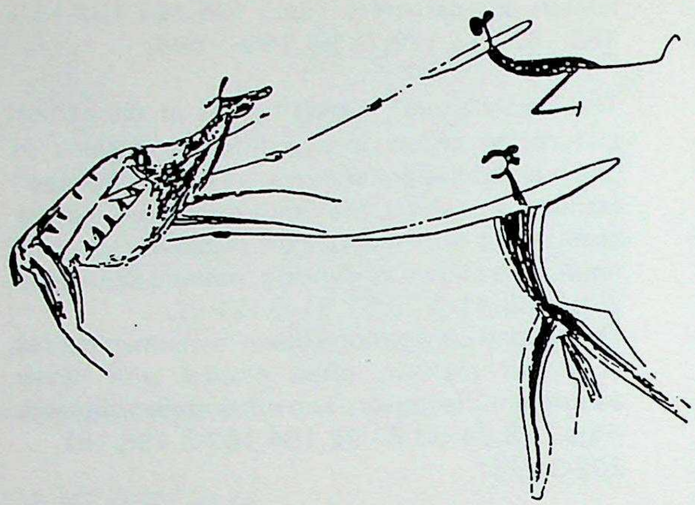


Fig.: ***39:*** *Kathotia*





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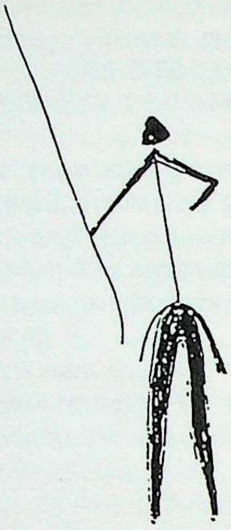

*Fig.:**40**: Bhopal*

*Fig.:**43**(from Fig.:196): Urden*

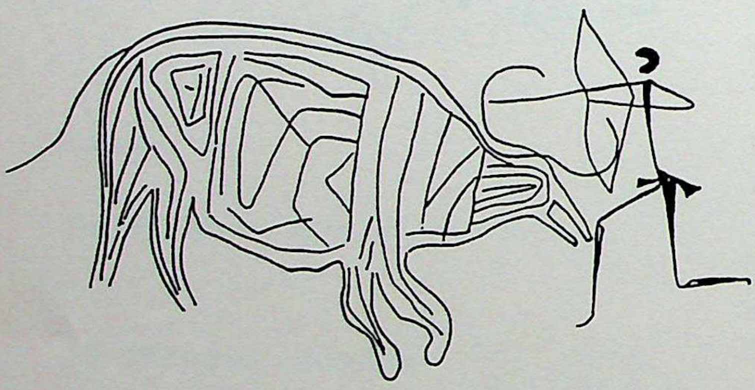

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*Fig.:**41**(from Fig.:81): Gupha Masir*

*Fig.:**42**(from Fig.:84): Gupha Masir*

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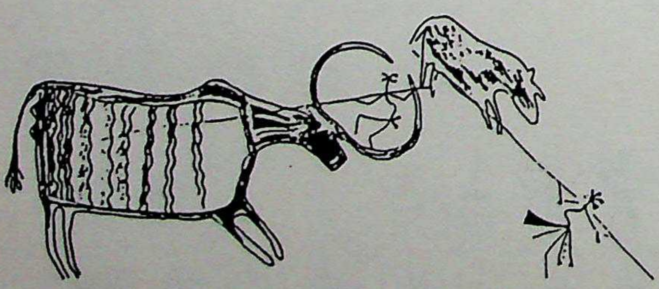
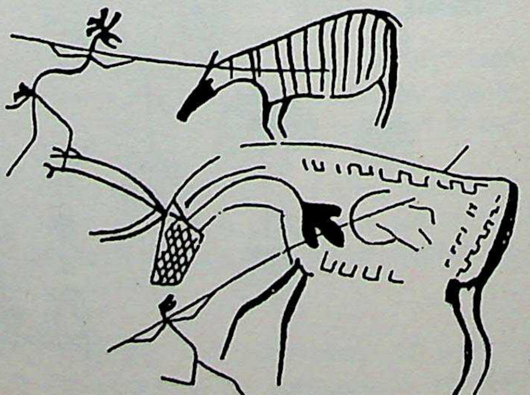
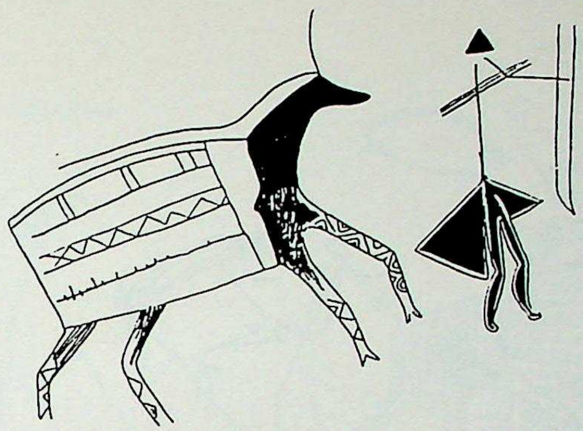
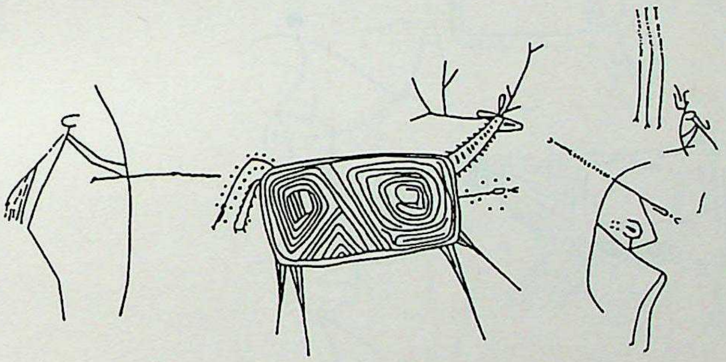




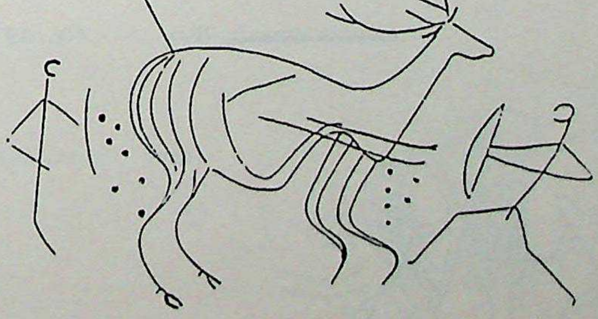


10 cm *Fig,:**44**: Kharwai*



20 cm *Fig.:**45**: Mahdeo Hills - Rajat Phrabat*

10 cm *Fig.:**46**: Putli Karar*



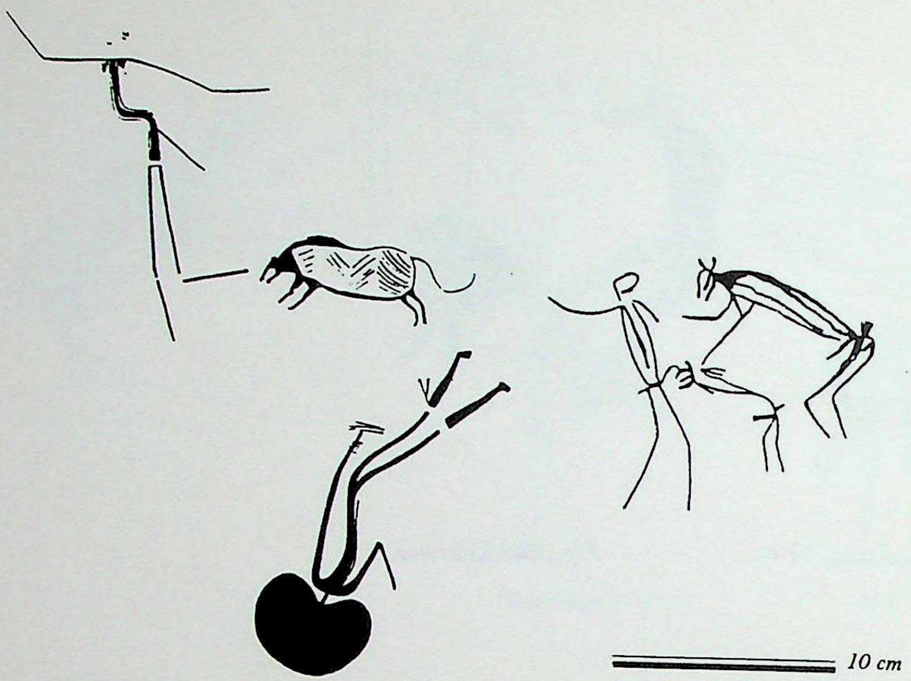


*Fig.:***47***: Raisen - Ramchaja*

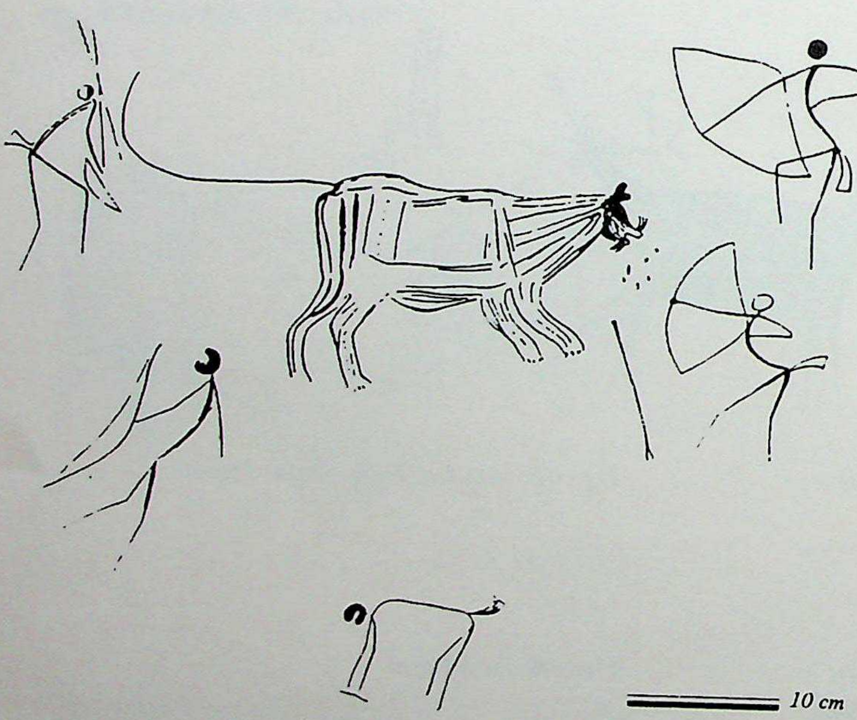


*Fig.:***48***: Kathotia*

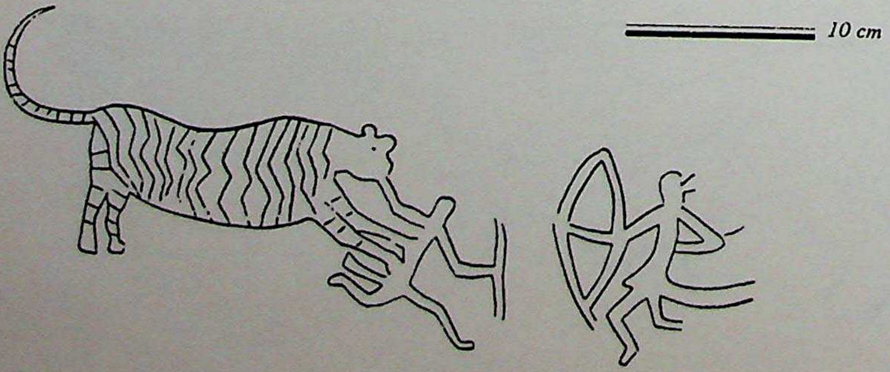


*Fig.:***49***: Chibbar Nulla*

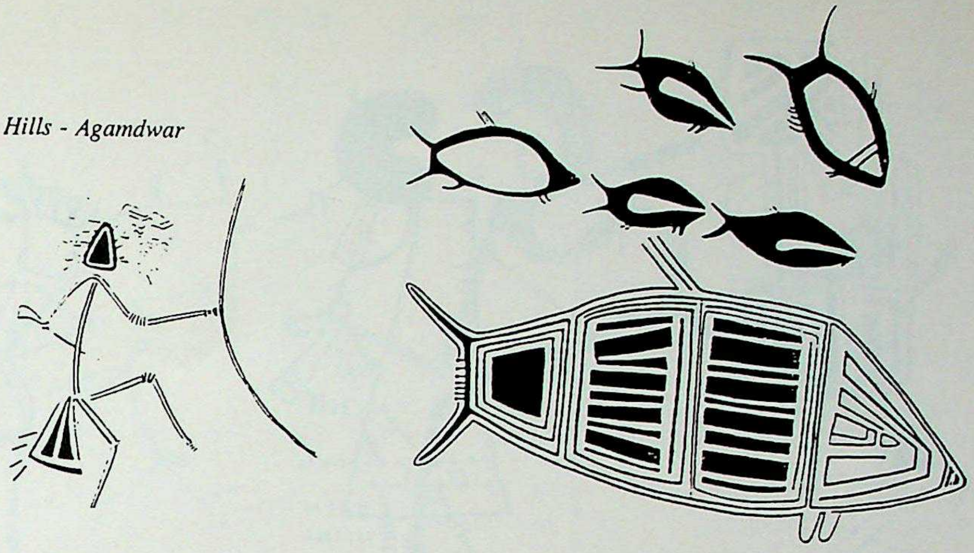


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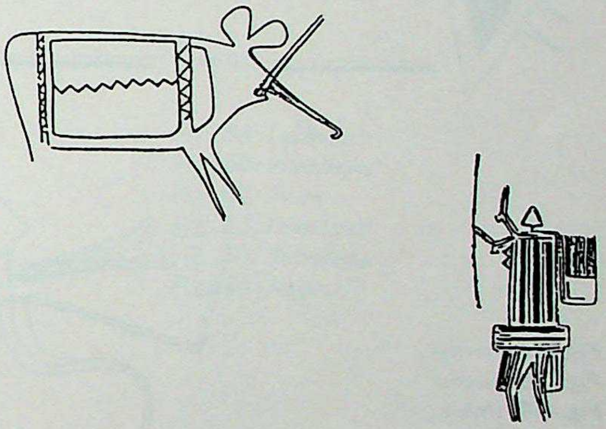
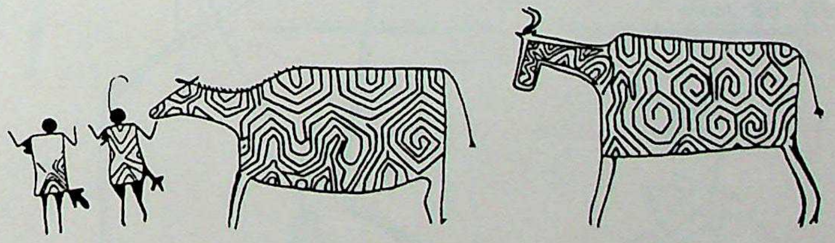
*Fig.:***50***: Mahadeo Hills - Agamdwar*



30 cm

*Fig.:***51***: Bhojpur*



40 cm

*Fig.:***52***: Gupha Masir*

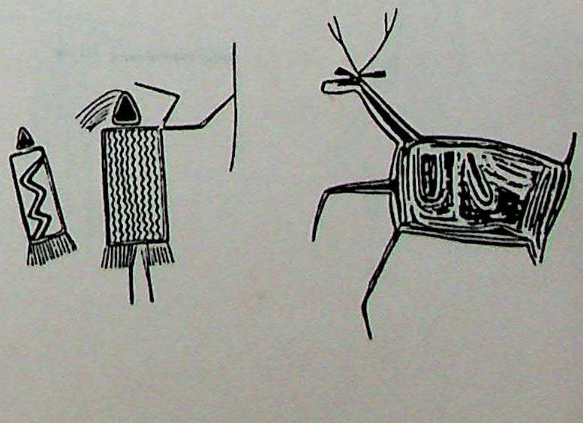


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*Fig.:***53***: Mahadeo Hills - Dorothy Deep*

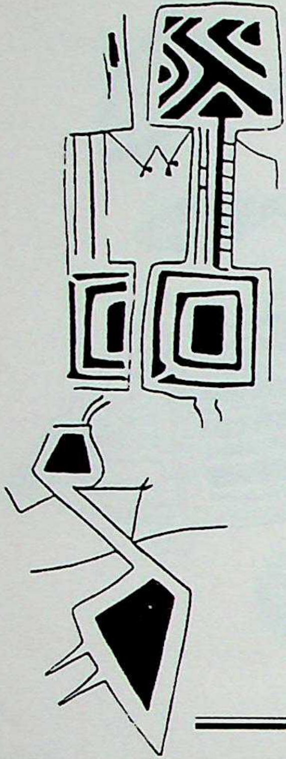

*Fig.:***54**

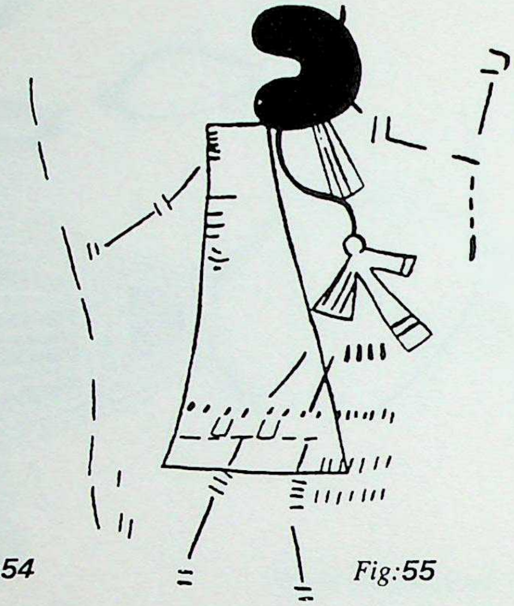

*Fig:***55**

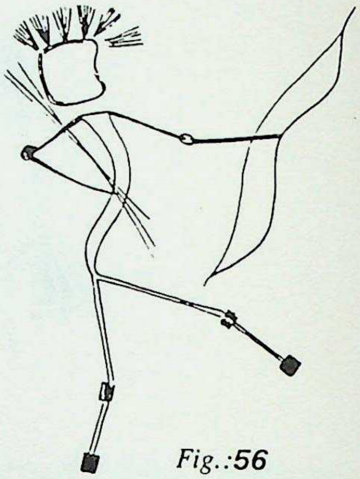

*Fig.:***56**

*Fig.:***54***: Firengi*
*Fig.:***55***: Firengi*
*Fig.:***56***: Urden*

*Fig.:***57***: Muni ki Pahar*
*Fig.:***58***: Jaora*

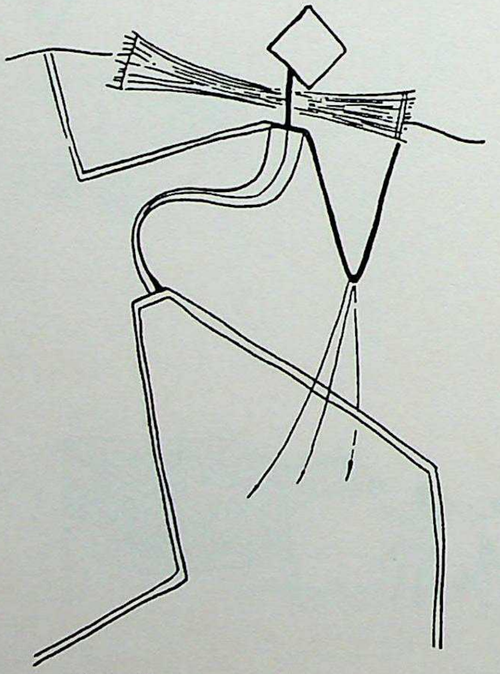

*Fig.:***57**

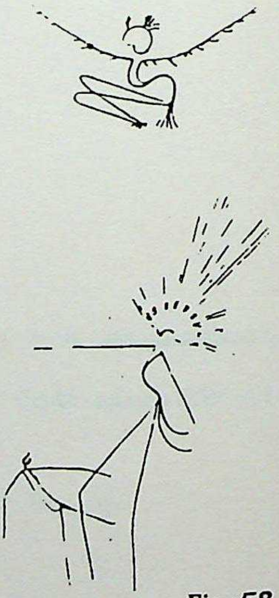

*Fig.:***58**

*Fig.:***60**

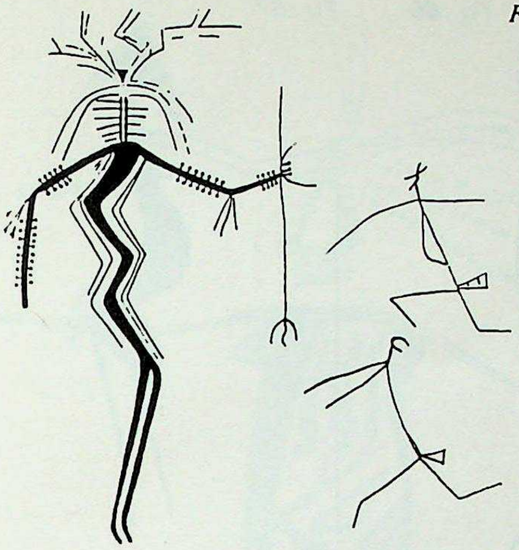

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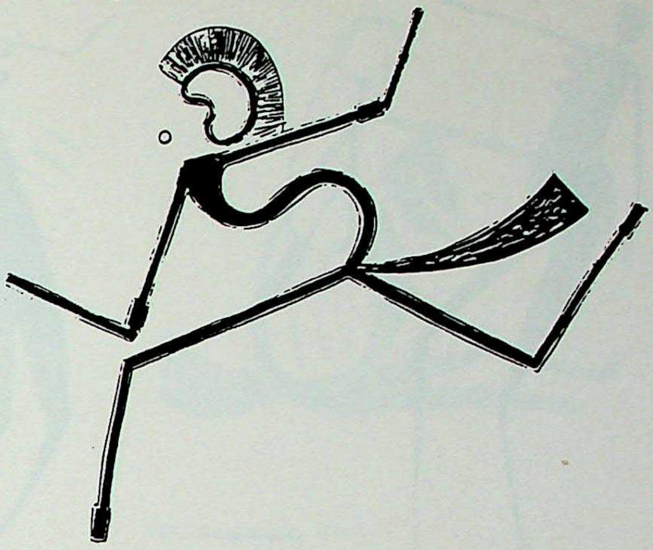
*Fig.:***59**



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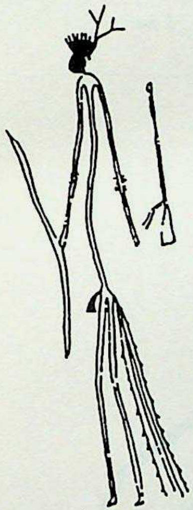

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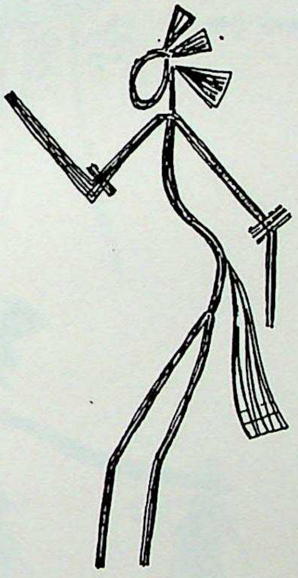
*Fig.:***61**



10 cm

*Fig.:***62**

*Fig.:***59***: Lakhajoar*
*Fig.:***60***: Bhimbetka*
*Fig.:***61***: Jaora*
*Fig.:***62***: Lakhajoar*
*Fig.:***63***: Bhimbetka*
*Fig.:***64***: Nagouri*

*Fig.:***63**

10 cm

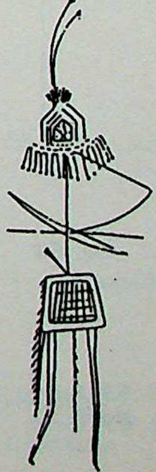


*Fig.:***64**

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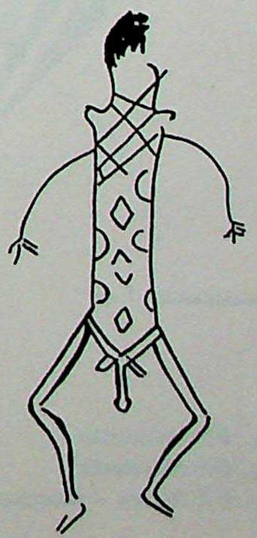
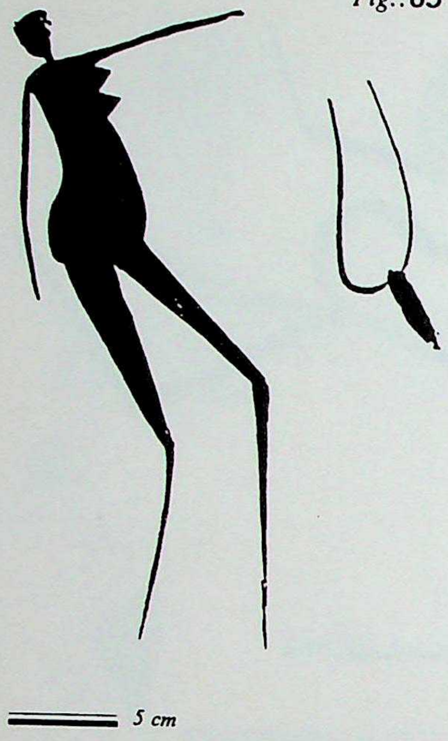


Fig.:**65**



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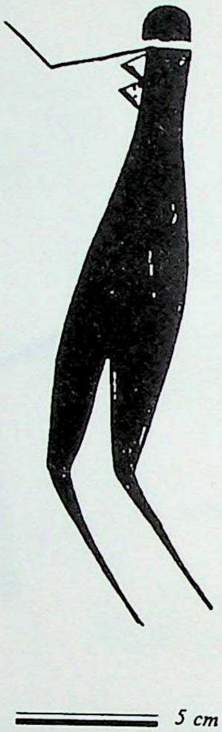

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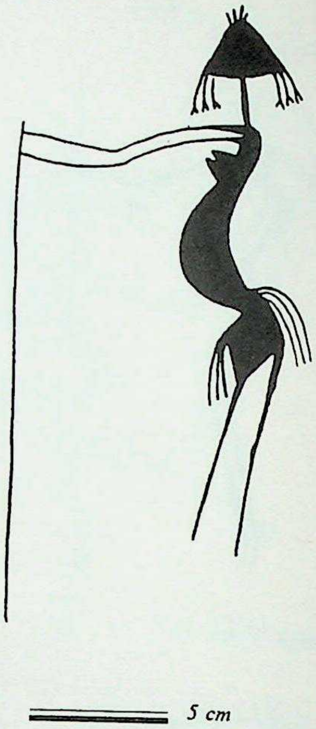


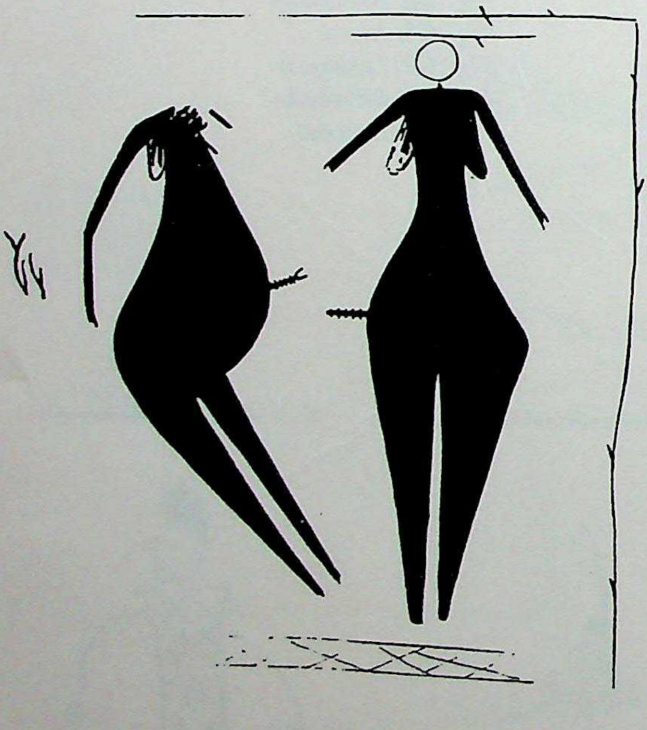


Fig.:**68**

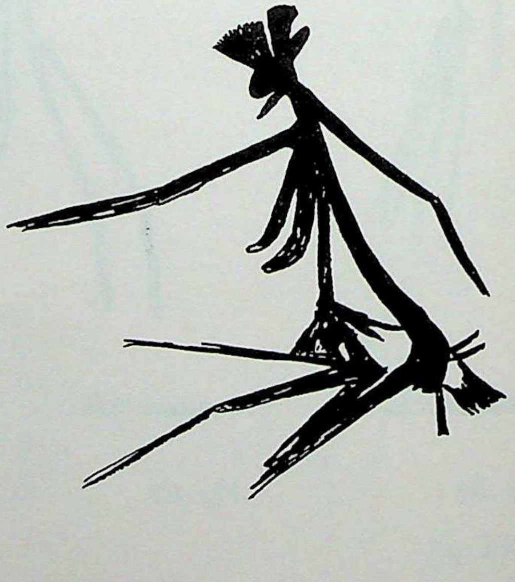


Fig.:**69**

*Fig.:***65***: Bhimbetka*
*Fig.:***66***: Bhimbetka*
*Fig.:***67***: Raisen - Ramchaja*
*Fig.:***68***: Jondra Cliff*
*Fig.:***69***: Urden*

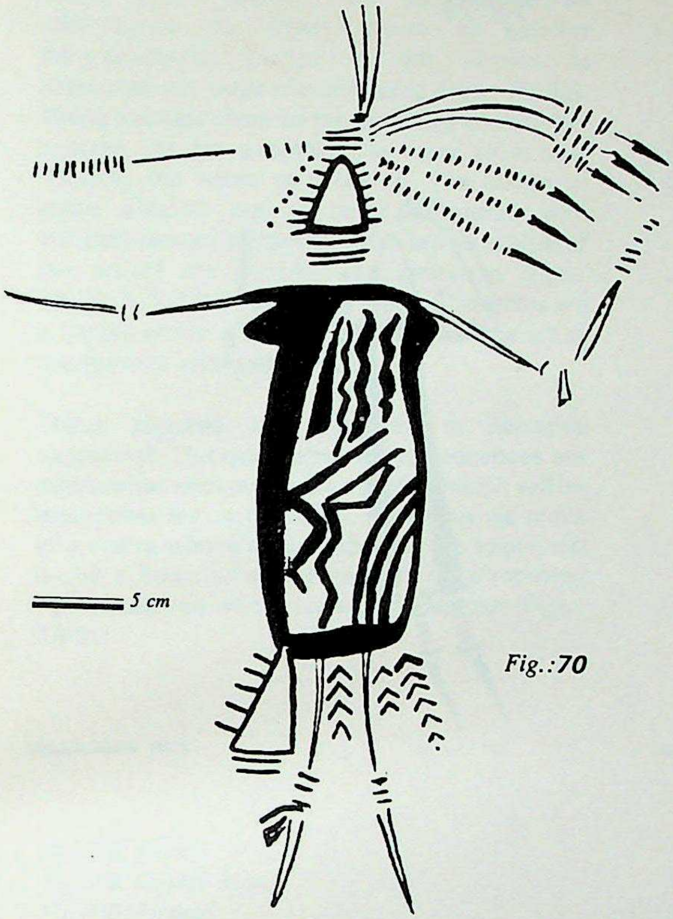


*Fig.:**70***

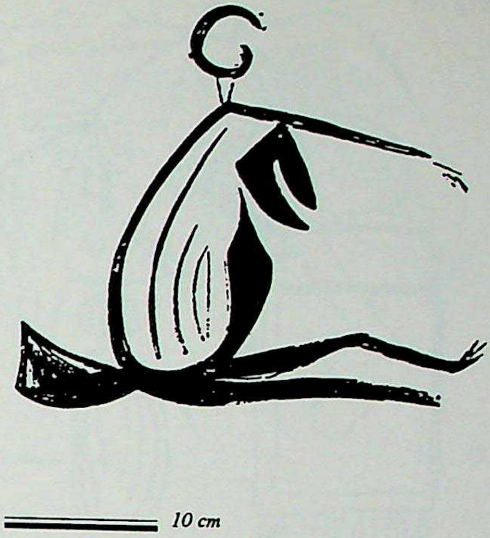


*Fig.:**71***

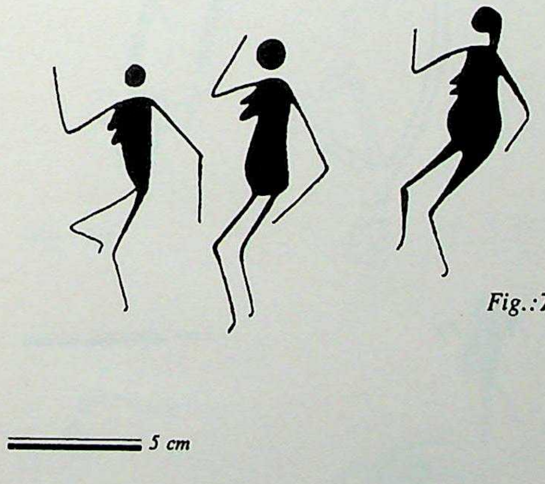


*Fig.:**73***

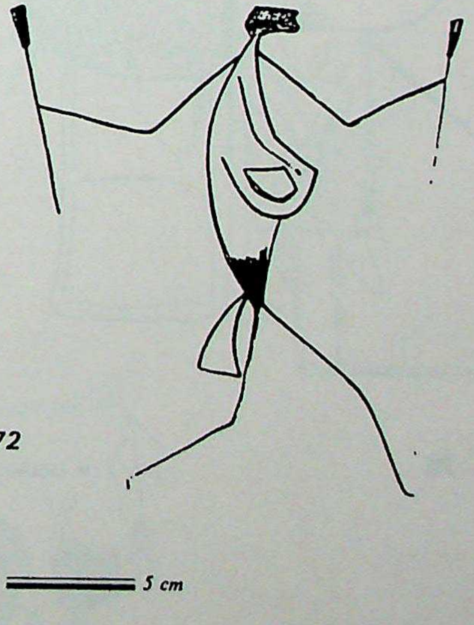


*Fig.:**72***

*Fig.:**70**: Mahadeo Hills - Bori East*
*Fig.:**71**: Lakhajoar*

*Fig.:**72**: Lakhajoar*
*Fig.:**73**: Kathotia*

*Fig.:**74***

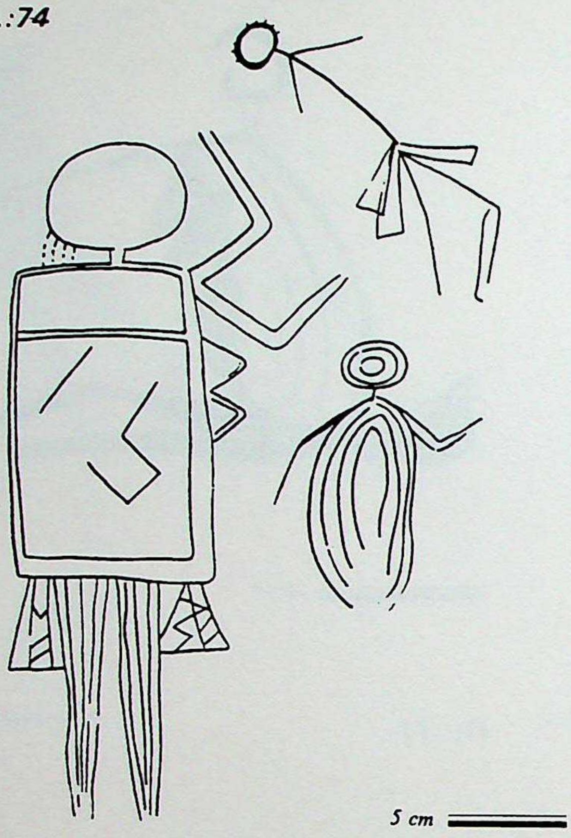
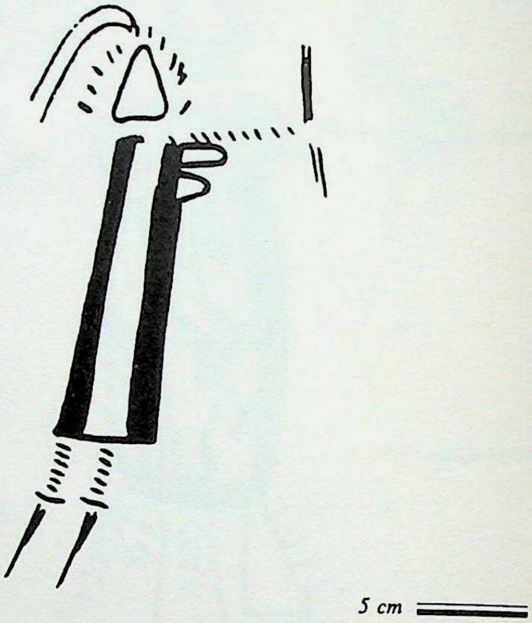


*Fig.:**75***



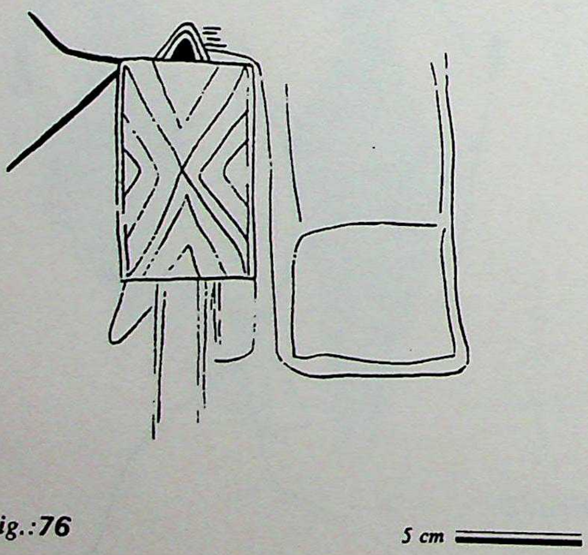


*Fig.:**76***

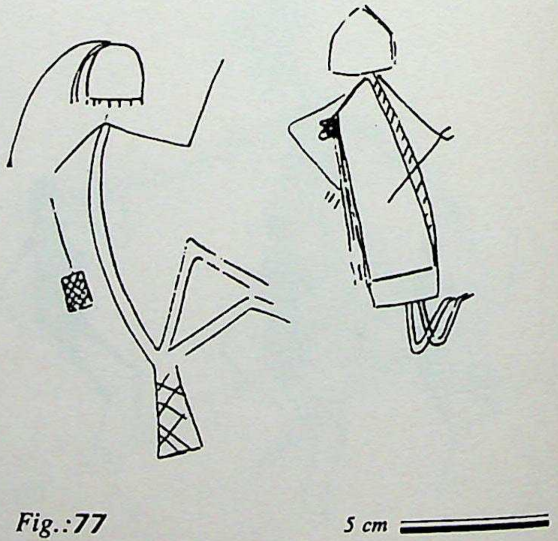


*Fig.:**77***

*Fig.:**74**: Bhojpur*
*Fig.:**75**: Mahadeo Hills - Bori West*
*Fig.:**76**: Firengi*
*Fig.:**77**: Firengi*

These stiff figures with overexaggerated adornments are often shown in peculiar body-positions, placed in the vicinity to comparatively huge animal figures (Figs.: 78,80). These animals often show attributes of different species, as for example the body of a boar sporting the horns of a bovine. The bodies of these animals are at times decorated with intricate design patterns, which are so typical of the art of the hunters and gatherers (Figs.: 78,80,157-79,271). These "deified" animals are a typical entity in all stylistic groups in the art of the hunters and gatherers.

These pictures are organized in narrative sequences. But quite often these sequences are interwoven with mythologies into which it will be impossible for us to follow. What can we make of a scene where several persons are seen lying under a boar, or a bird perches on a reclining figure, besides whom stands an elephant (Figs.: 78-9)?

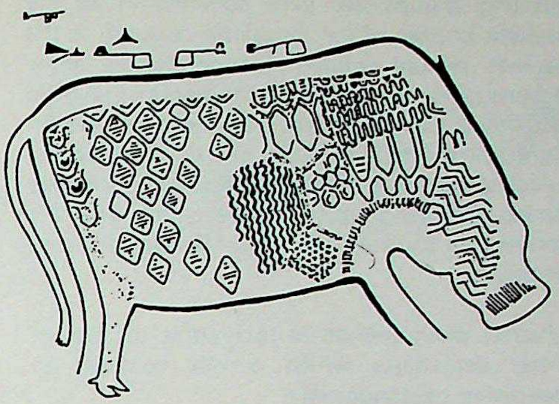


*Fig.:**80***

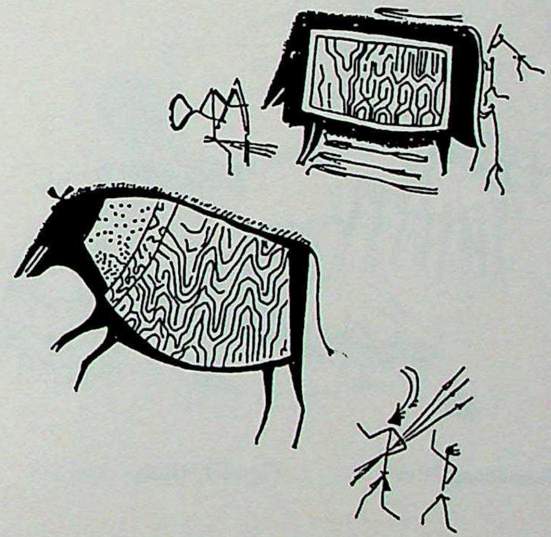
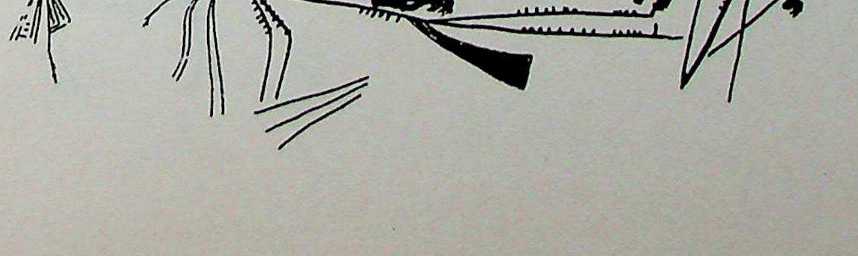


*Fig.:**78***

*Fig.:**78**: Firengi*
*Fig.:**79**: Gupha Masir*
*Fig.:**80**: Firengi*

*Fig.:**79***

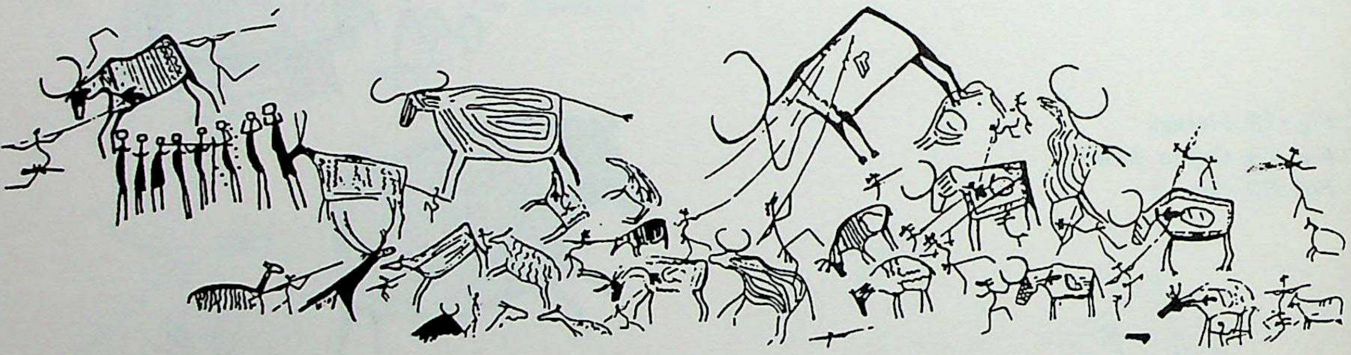


Hunting groups are very common in all the stylistic phases of the mesolithic rock-art. In the earliest picture groups hunting scenes show dozens of hunters, who attack herds of animals with their microlith-barbed spears (Figs.: 81-6). Contrary to the depiction of anthropomorphs, which underwent considerable stylistic changes during the long span of mesolithic art, the convention for drawing animal figures remained unaltered.

Another phenomenon in rock-art is the use of X-ray depictions which is not confined to mesolithic paintings only.
In the mesolithic rock-art we can distinguish between an "anatomically correct" X-ray style and a "schematic decorative" X-ray style. While in the former intestines, heart, lungs and digestive tract are indicated (Figs.: 16,41,81-5,88,90-4,98-100,104,108,134,169, 590,599,688), the latter shows decorative features, which are more pronounced than the anatomic ones (Figs.:3,81,84-7,89,95-7, 101-4,138,196,302,348).
In chalcolithic and historic paintings X-ray features are mostly confined to the depictions of fetuses inside the gravid animals (Figs.: 590,599,688).

X-ray style was not only used to show anatomical internal features of animals, but also content of containers (Figs.: 153-5,589,594, 607-9,618,637-9) or subterraneous cavities, like rats in their burrows (Figs.: 153-4,589,594, 607-9,618,637-9). Depiction of skeletons in animals, however, is conspicuously absent. Only in figures of fish are herring-bone patterns indicative of skeletal features (Figs.: 254,285).

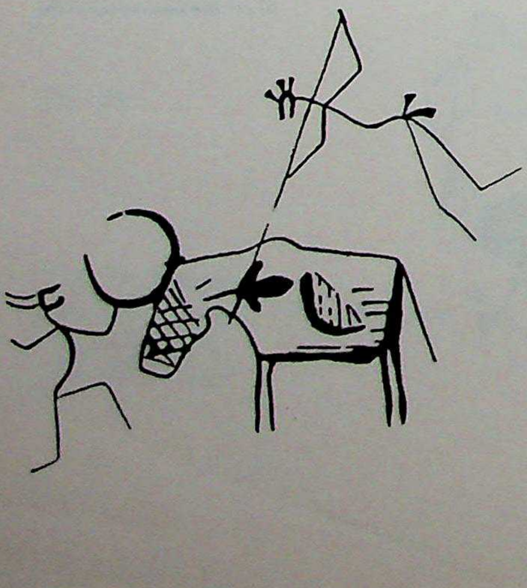
"Schematic-decorative" and "naturalistic" X-ray patterns appear at times in the same stylistic group, and sometimes even in one and the same composition (Figs.: 41,81,84-5,93,100,196, 254).



10 cm

*Fig.:**81**: Gupha Masir*

*Fig.:**82**(from Fig.:81): Gupha Masir*



10 cm

*Fig.:**83**(from Fig.:81): Gupha Masir*

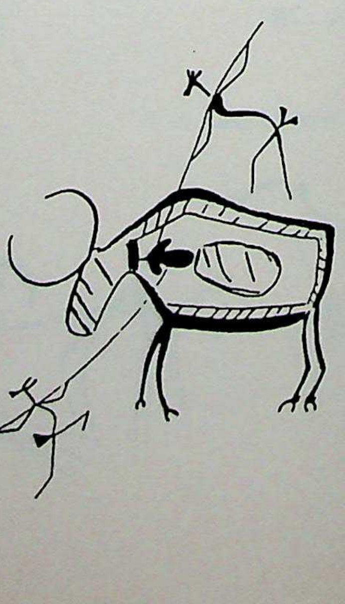


Fig.:**84**: Gupha Masir

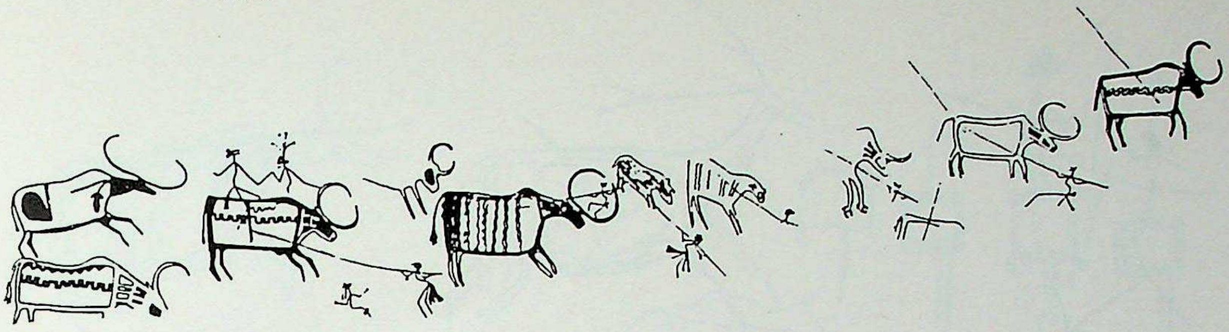


Fig.:**85**(from Fig.:84): Gupha Masir

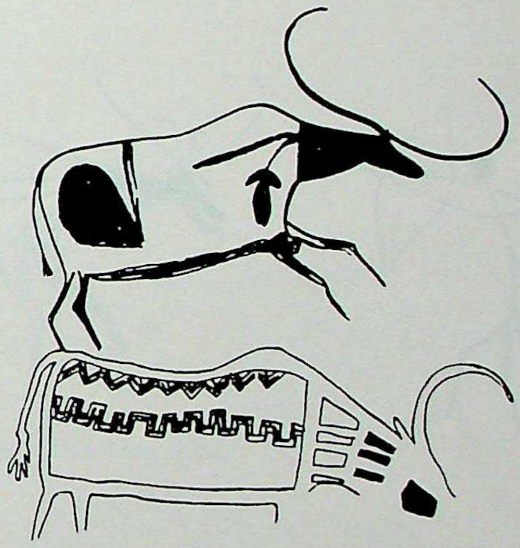
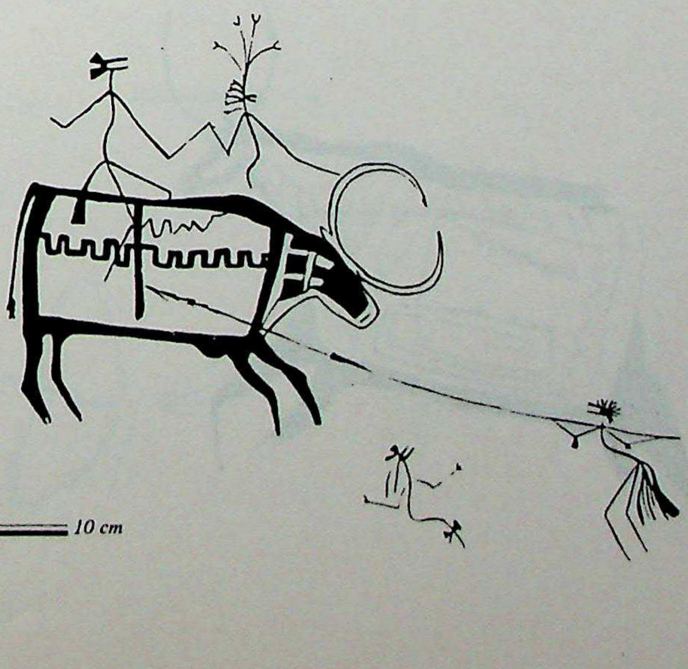


Fig.:**86**(from Fig.:84): Gupha Masir



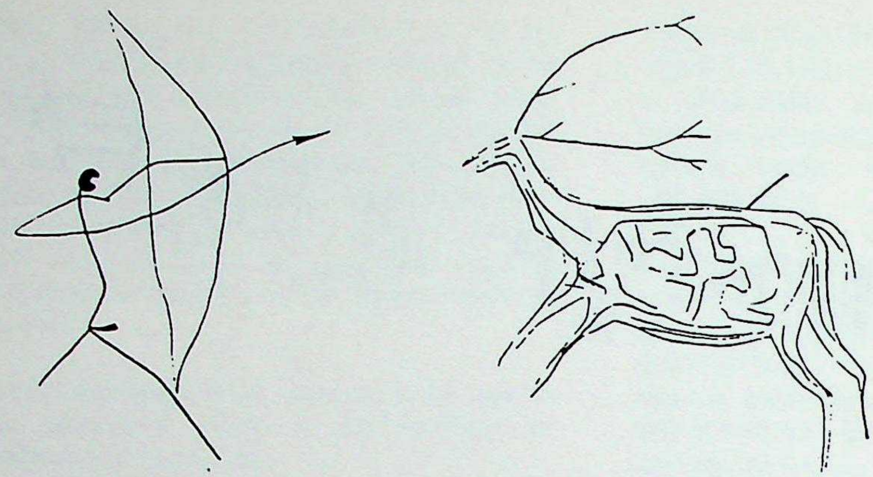
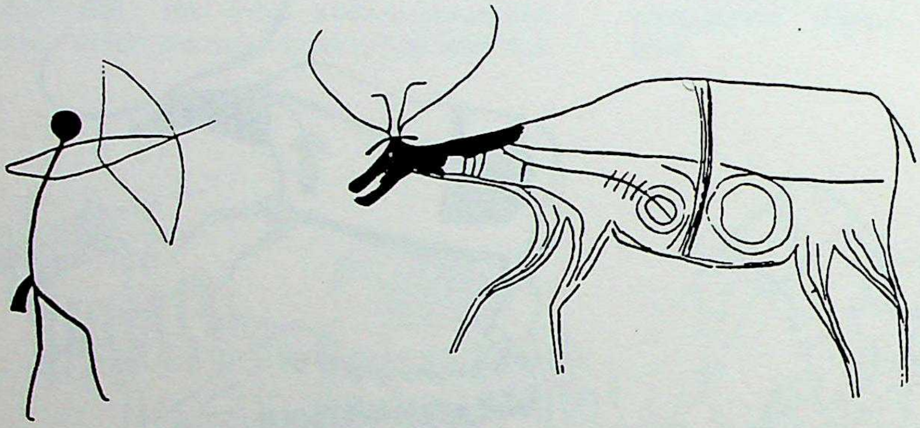


*Fig.:**87**: Kathotia*

50 cm

*Fig.:**88**: Kathotia*



50 cm

*Fig.:**89**: Urden*

5 cm

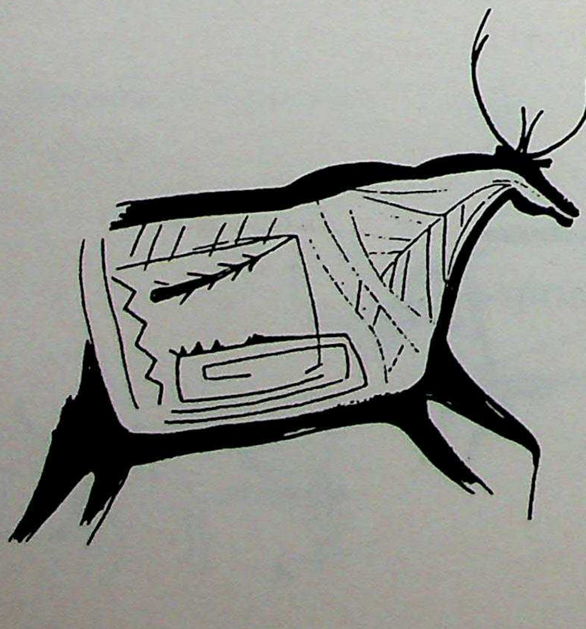
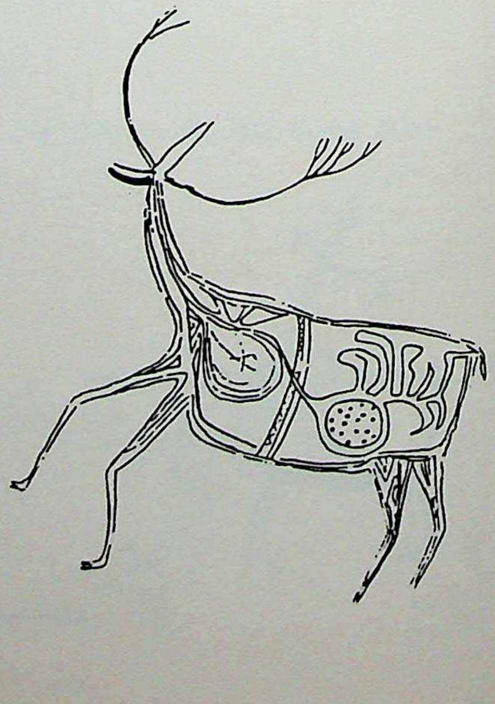


*Fig.:**90**: Kathotia*

50 cm



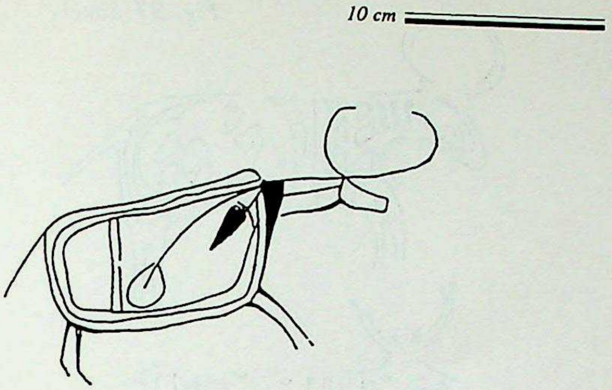


Fig.:**91**: Gupha Masir

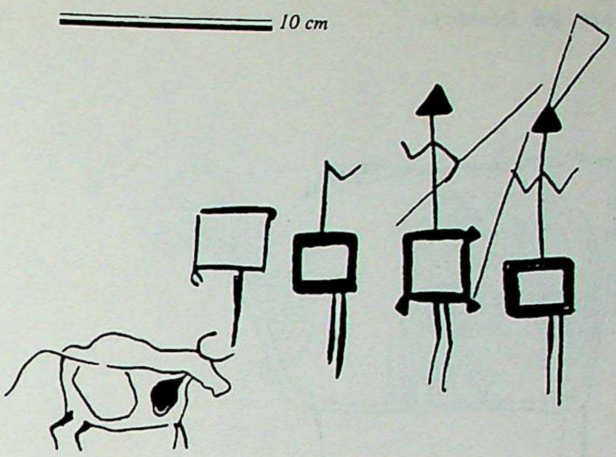


Fig.:**92**: Gupha Masir

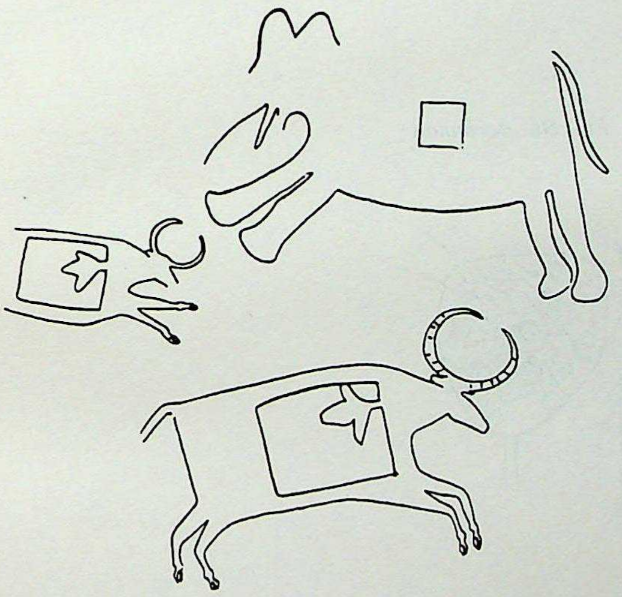


Fig.:**93**: Chibbar Nulla

Fig.:**94**(from Fig.:134): Chibbar Nulla

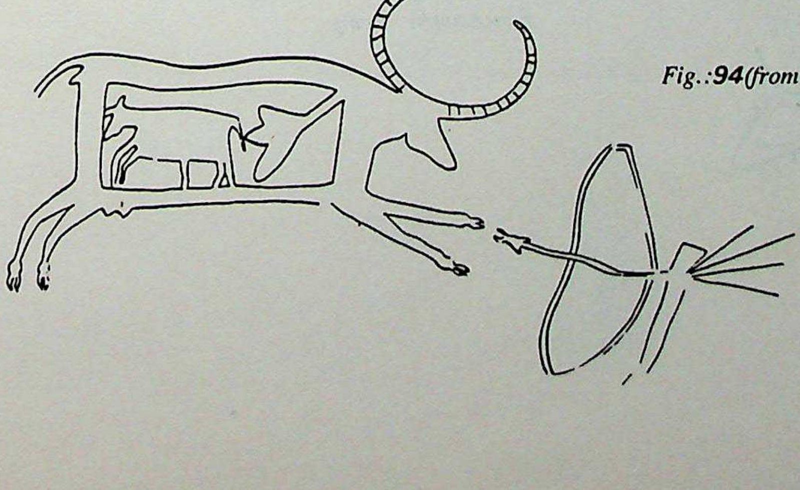


*Fig.:***95***: Barounda*

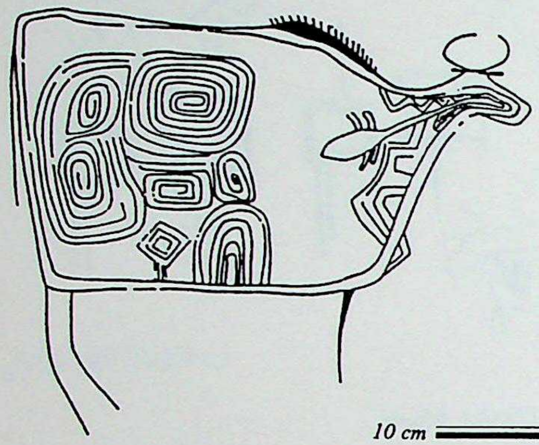
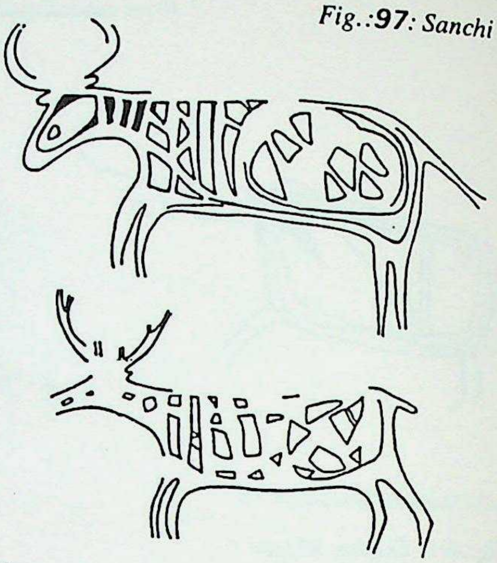


*Fig.:***97***: Sanchi*

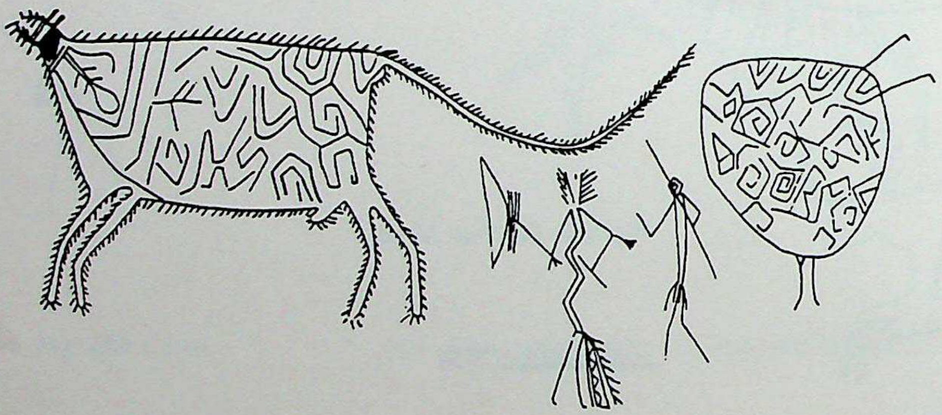


10 cm

20 cm

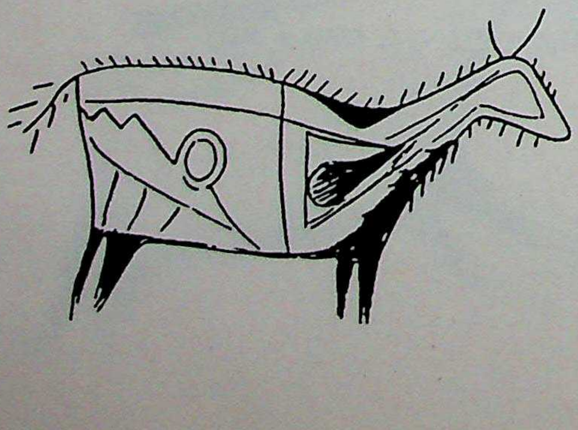
10 cm

*Fig.:***96***: Barounda*



5 cm

*Fig.:***98***: Robertsganj*
Panchmukhi Romp



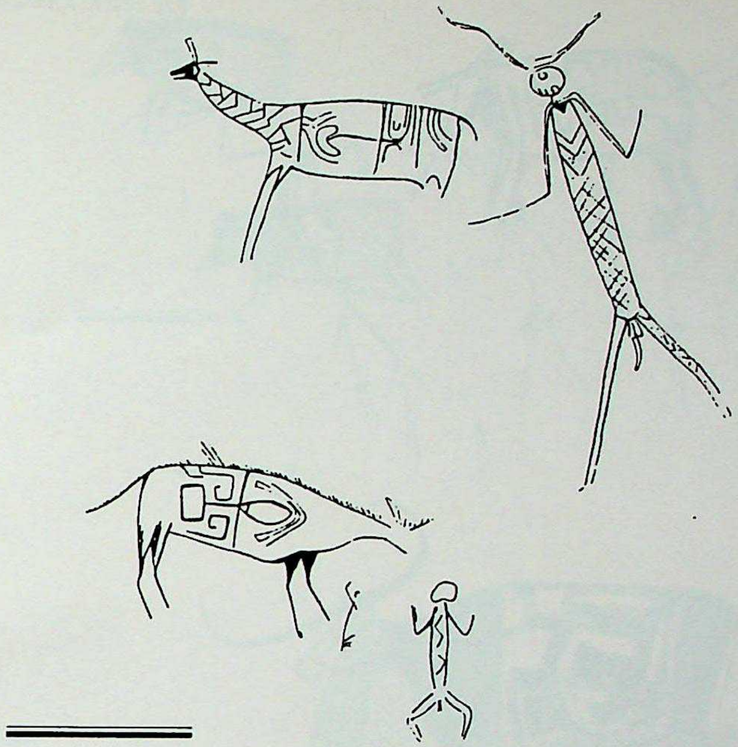


*Fig.:***99***: Badami - Hiregudda*

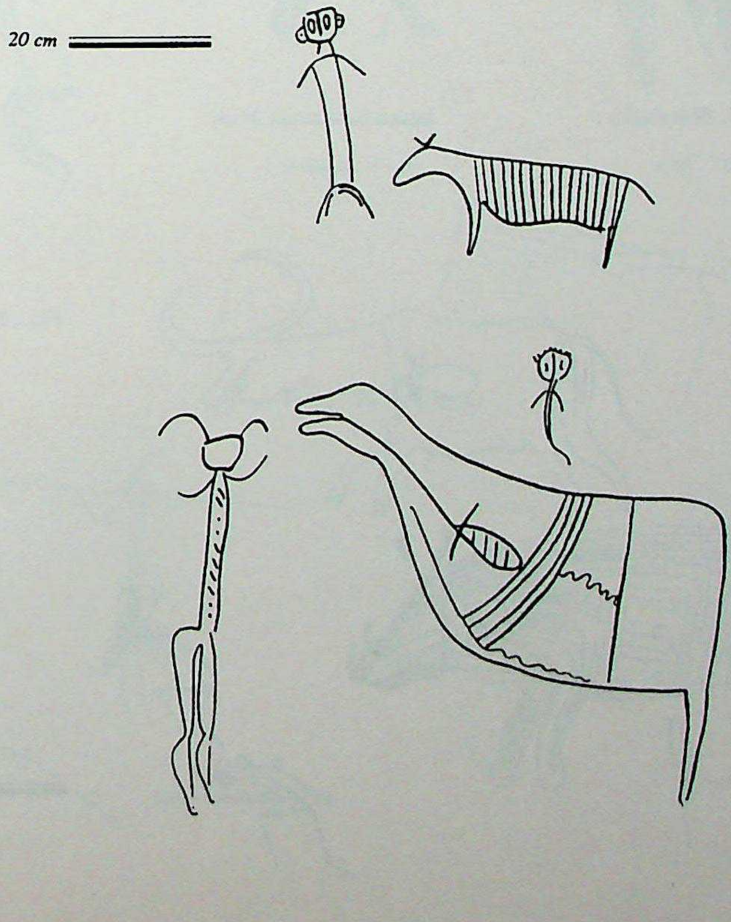


*Fig.:***100***: Badami - Hiregudda*

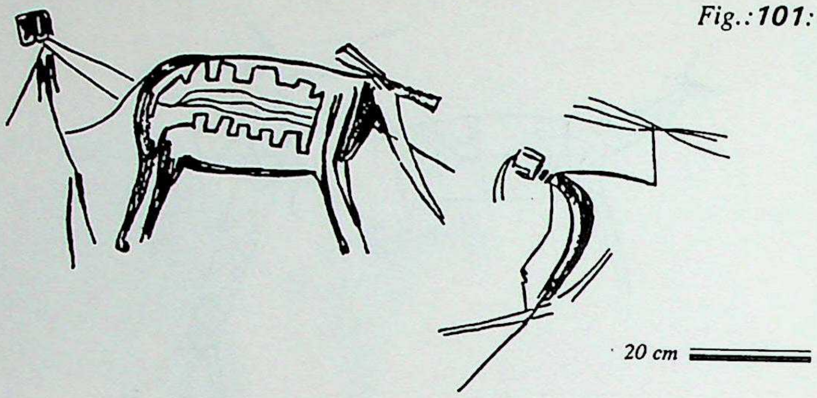


Fig.: **101**: *Kharwai*

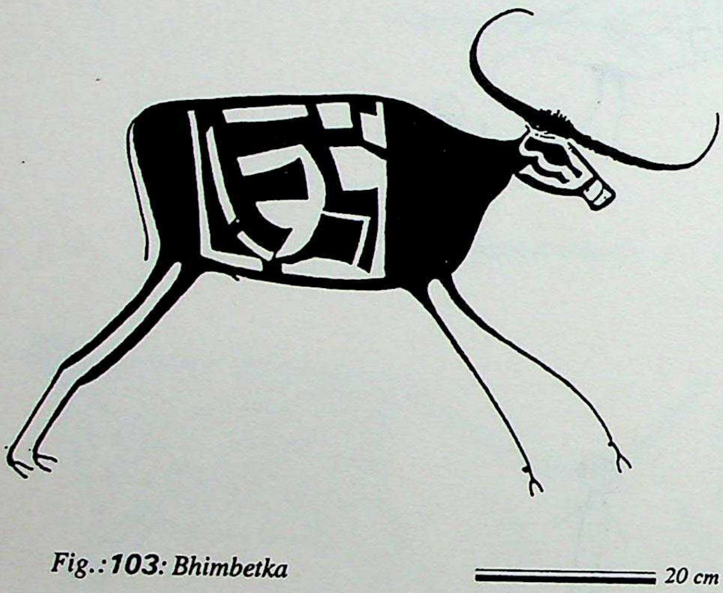


Fig.: **103**: *Bhimbetka*

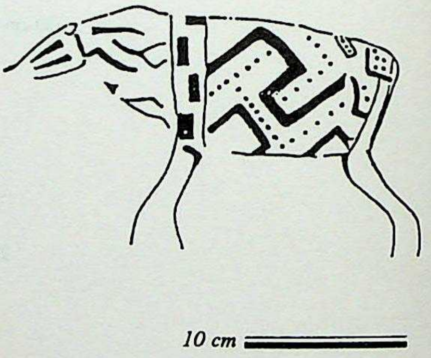


Fig.: **102**: *Kathotia*

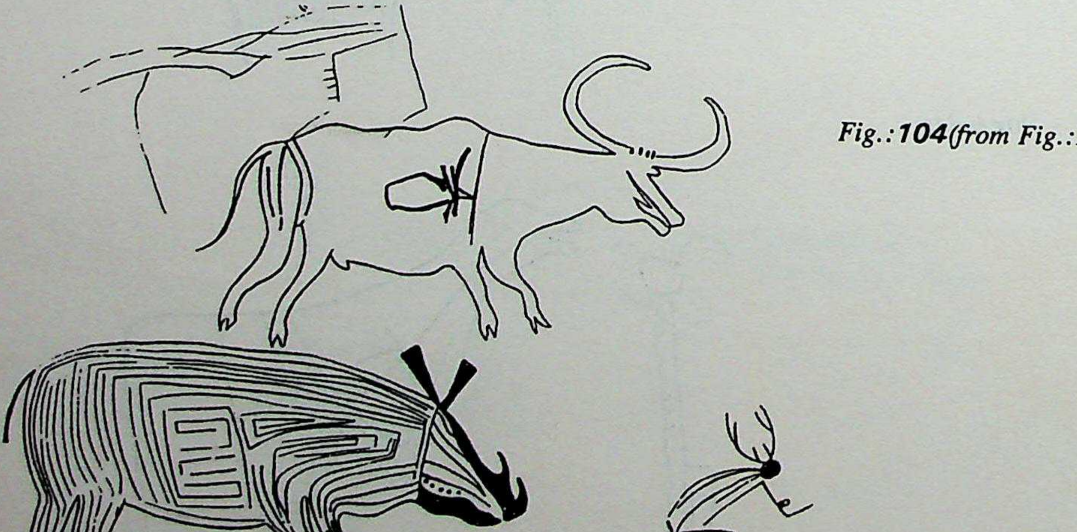


Fig.: **104***(from Fig.:196): Urden*

Fig.: ***105****: Kathotia*

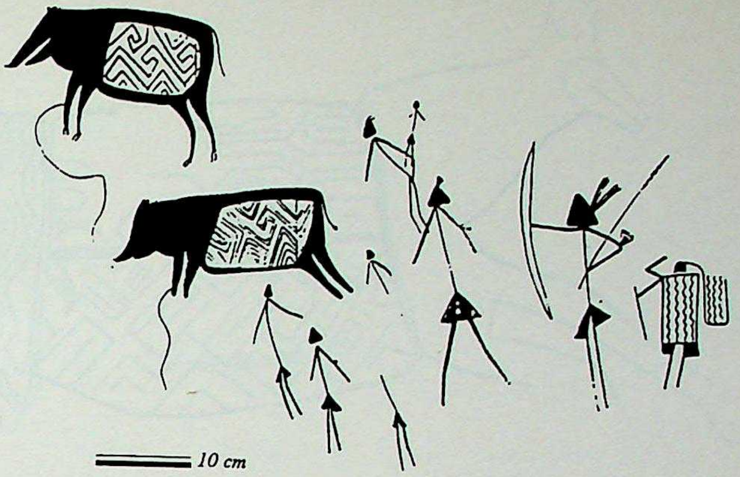
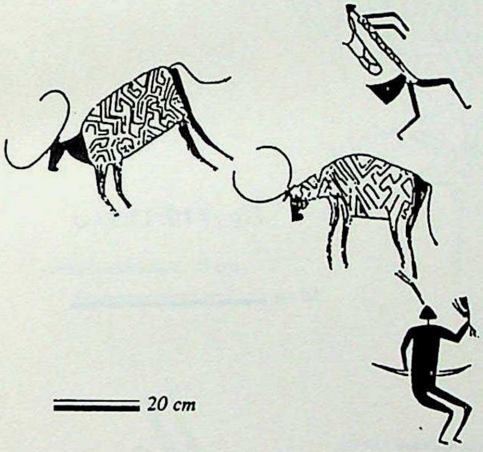


Fig.: ***106****: Bhojpur*



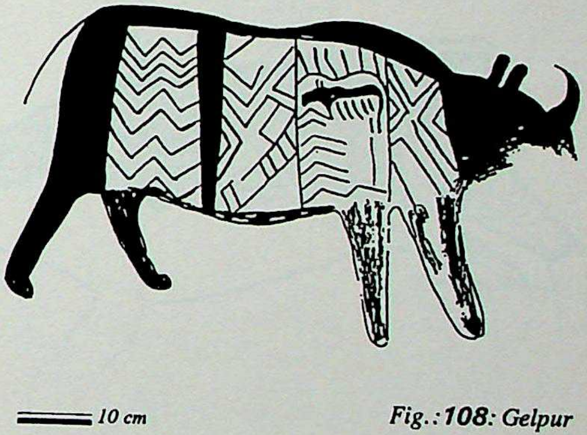
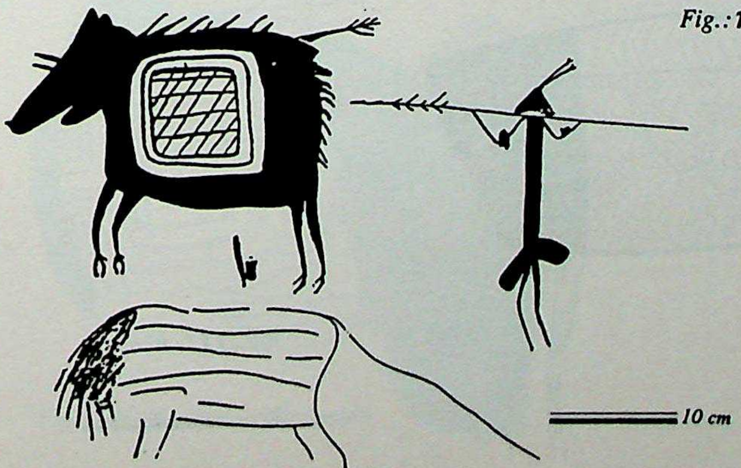


Fig.: ***108****: Gelpur*

Fig.: ***107****: Abchand*



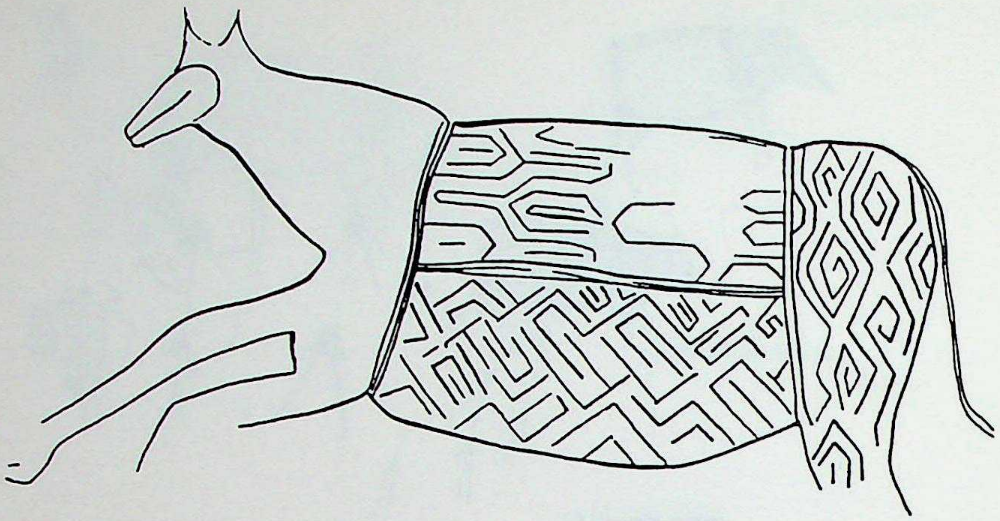


Fig.: ***109****: Firengi*

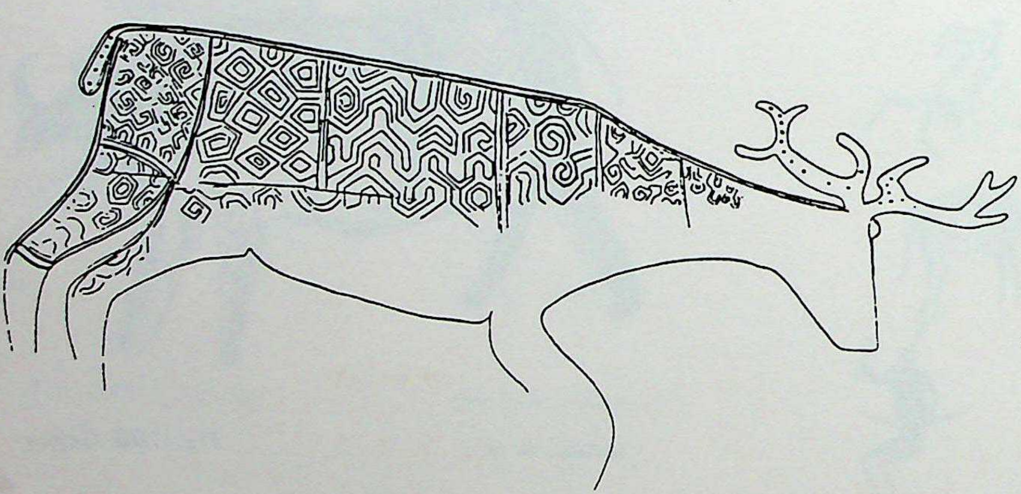


Fig.: ***110****: Chiklod*

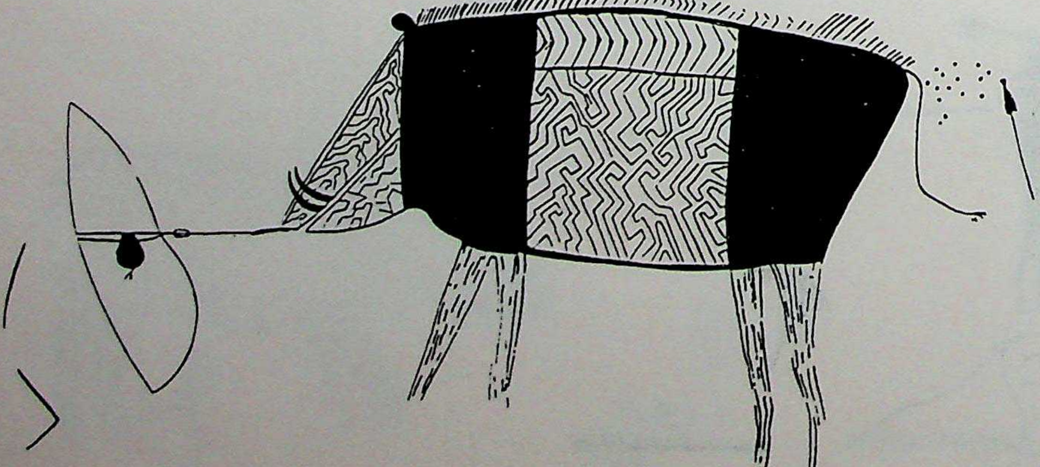


Fig.: ***111****: Bhojpur*

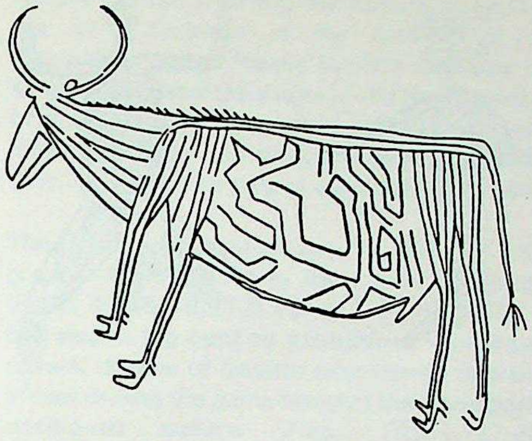
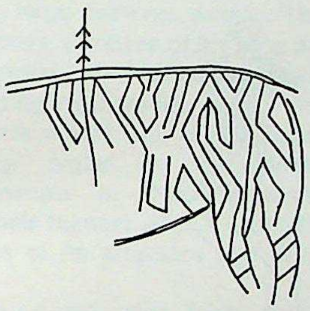


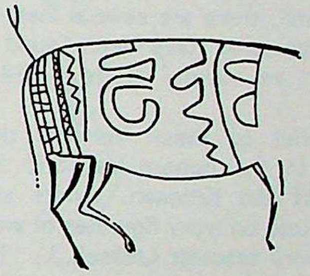
Fig.: ***112****: Bhopal*

20 cm

Fig.: ***113****: Badami - Aregudda*

Fig.: ***114****: Badami*

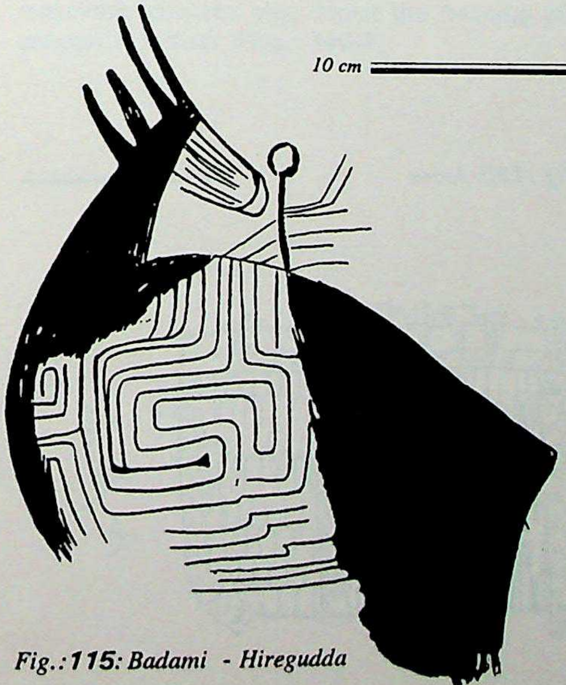




20 cm

10 cm

10 cm



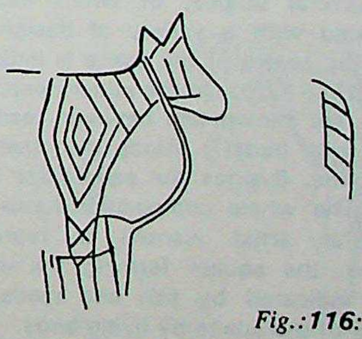


Fig.: ***116****: Aiholi*

20 cm

Fig.: ***115****: Badami - Hiregudda*

Some of the most conspicuous stylistic features of mesolithic rock-art in India are the intricate labyrinthine designs, composed of rhombic meanders or honeycomb patterns (Figs.: 34-7,52,64,105-6,109-16,201,117-20,157,161, 167-70,183-4,186,337).

These design patterns are to be found exclusively in the mesolithic rock pictures. In several cases they are seen covering large spaces on rockwalls, as if made for surface decoration (Figs.: 34,35,37); in others they are to be found as body patterns on animal figures (Figs.: 51-3,78,80,95-6,102,105-6,109-16,122, 167-71,177,179,197,201,222,240,273,277, 309,311).

Quite often the square-shaped bodies of women are decorated with these intricate patterns as well (Figs.: 51,53,76,119,183-4,186,191,226, 279,338,340). On male figures these decorations are rare, most probably on account of their rather slim depiction. Still, there are several instances, where intricate patterns have been found over male figures as well (Figs.: 54,64, 117-8,134,278).

A striking parallel to these intricate design patterns exists in the upperpalaeolithic art of Mezin, a site at the Krimean, where similar patterns were found on ivory figurines of women as also on an ivory bracelet (Jelinek,J., 1980: Abb. 626-9,715).

That these design patterns most probably had deeper significance than the pure decorative is suggested by several compositions where these designs form a thematic centre (Figs.: 34, 36). One painting from Jaora shows a square, divided into several stripes, of which each one is decorated with a variety of design patterns, while the centre of the space is indicated by a circle (Fig.: 120). On the upper periphery of the square are shown fish between reeds or lotus stems with buds(?). Along the other sides are waterbirds. Besides the square are four flying birds. The whole composition looks as if the mesolithic artist wanted to represent the cosmos, the square forming the earth, with water indicated by fish and reeds, and the regions of the space by flying birds.

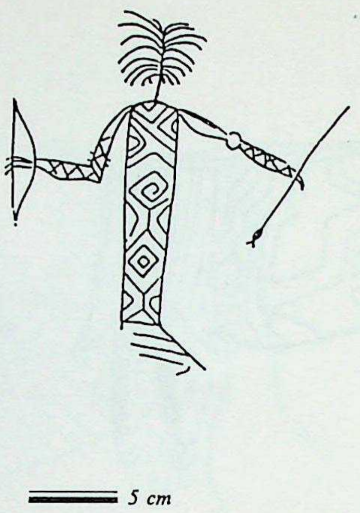


*Fig.:**117**: Badami*

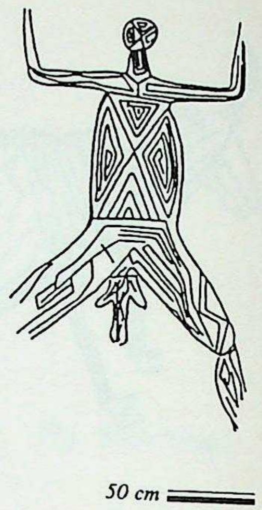


*Fig.:**118**: Benakal Forest Mallapur*

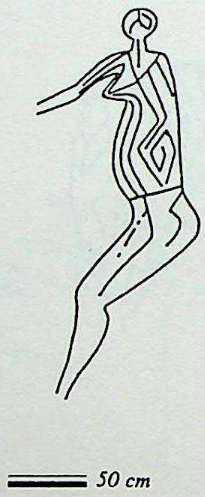
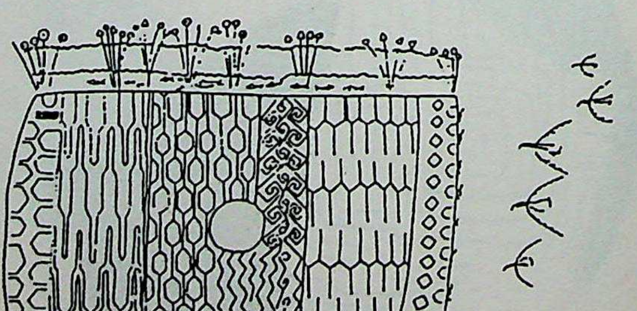


*Fig.:**119**: Benakal Forest Hire Benakal*

*Fig.:**120**: Jaora*



Picture groups showing the hunting of animals are very common in the rock-art of the mesolithic period. Indeed hunting might be the single most depicted theme in the rock paintings of this period. From these pictures we learn about the tools and weapons used during that time, as well as strategies used during the hunt.

The hunt was carried out not only in small groups in which two or three men cooperated (Figs.: 40,45,48,87-8,121-6,131,136,240), but also in big hunting expeditions. comprising several dozens of beaters who moved forwards in files driving the game towards the strategically positioned archers (Figs.: 81,84,127-30, 137,239).
In these large organized hunting groups the narrative character of the Indian rock-art is seen at its best. A number of minor incidents are woven in these large hunting panels. These incidents are intimate glimpses of life long past. It is a source material, which is not available in any other archaeological material.
There is the scene where one of the hunters grabs a fleeing piglet by its hindlegs (Figs.:127-8), animals in their desperation turning against their hunters (Figs.: 49,132), a rhino dashing one of its attackers into the air (Fig.: 131).
The hunting groups also give fairly detailed descriptions of traps (Figs.: 105,136,138-41). Snares are arranged in a semicircle, into which a deer is driven (Fig.: 136), or frames of bamboo splinters(?) are fastened into the shrubbery to entangle the fleeing animals (Fig.: 138). Several mesolithic pictures also depict the trapping of animals in pitfalls (Figs.: 140-1).

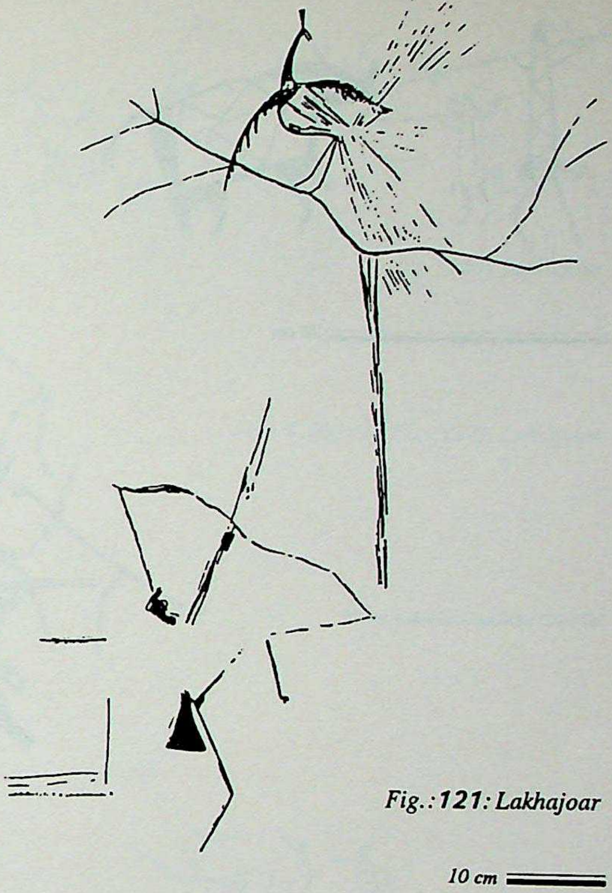


*Fig.:**121**: Lakhajoar*

*Fig.:**122**: Kathotia*

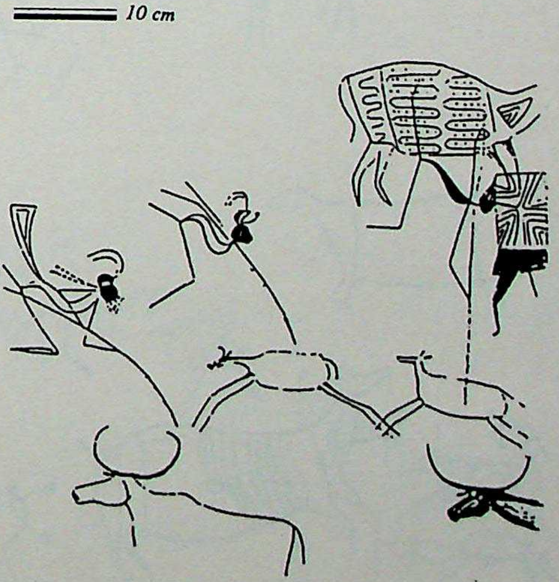


Fig.: ***123****: Robertsganj - Panchmukhi Romp*

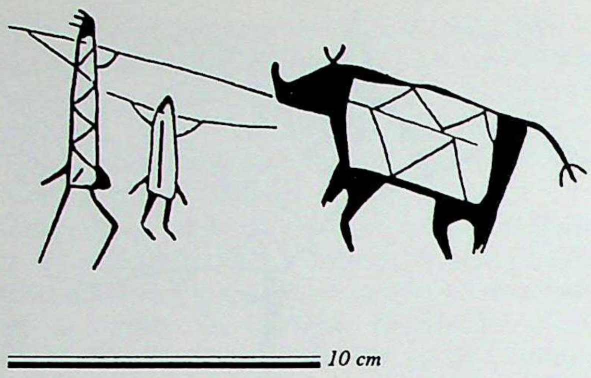
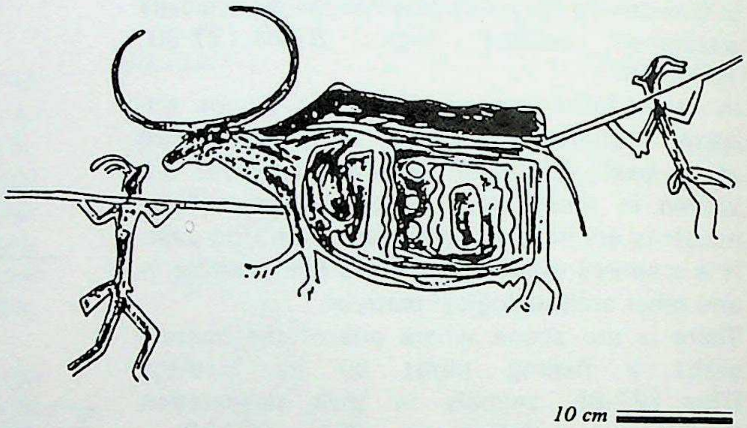


Fig.: ***124****: Gupha Masir*



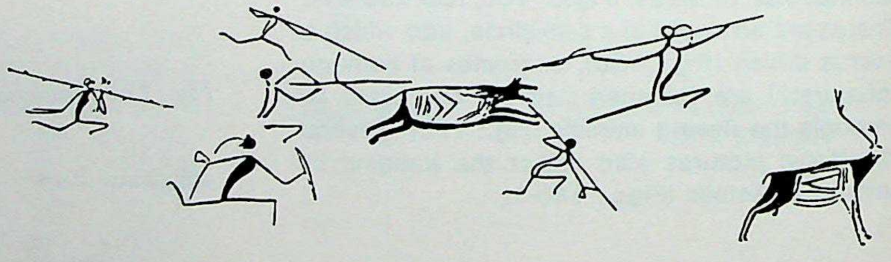


Fig.: ***125****: Kathotia*

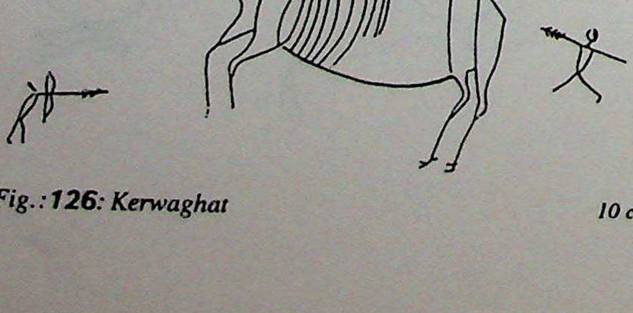


Fig.: ***126****: Kerwaghat*

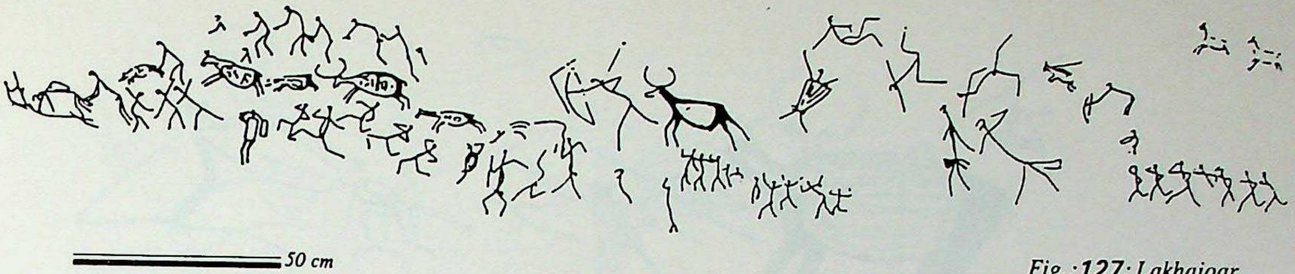


Fig.: ***127****: Lakhajoar*

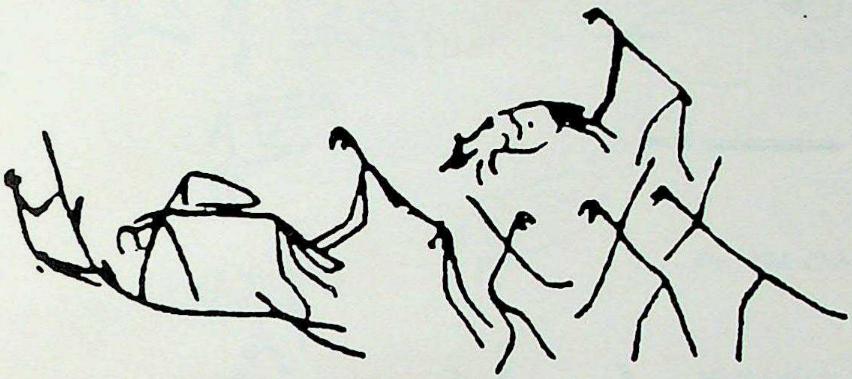
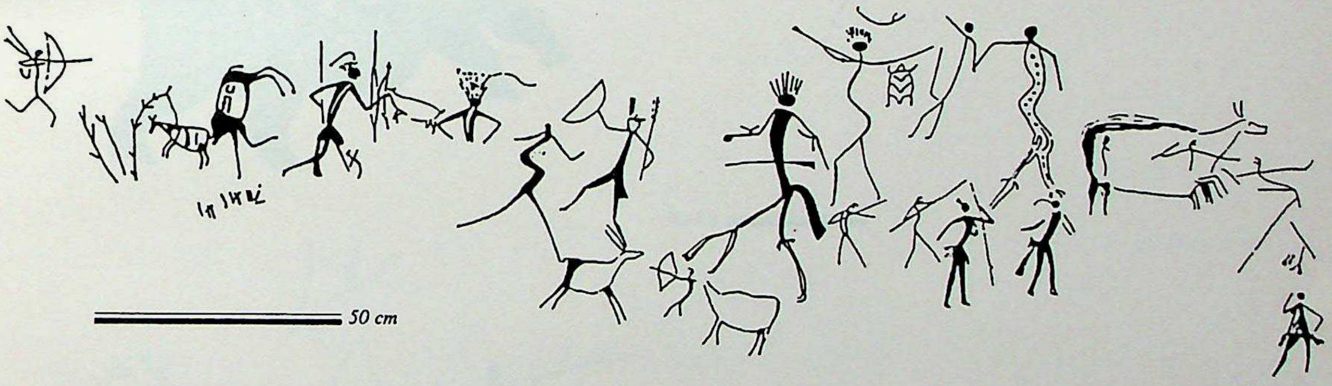


Fig.: ***128****(from Fig.:127): Lakhajoar*

Fig.: ***129****: Bhimbetka*



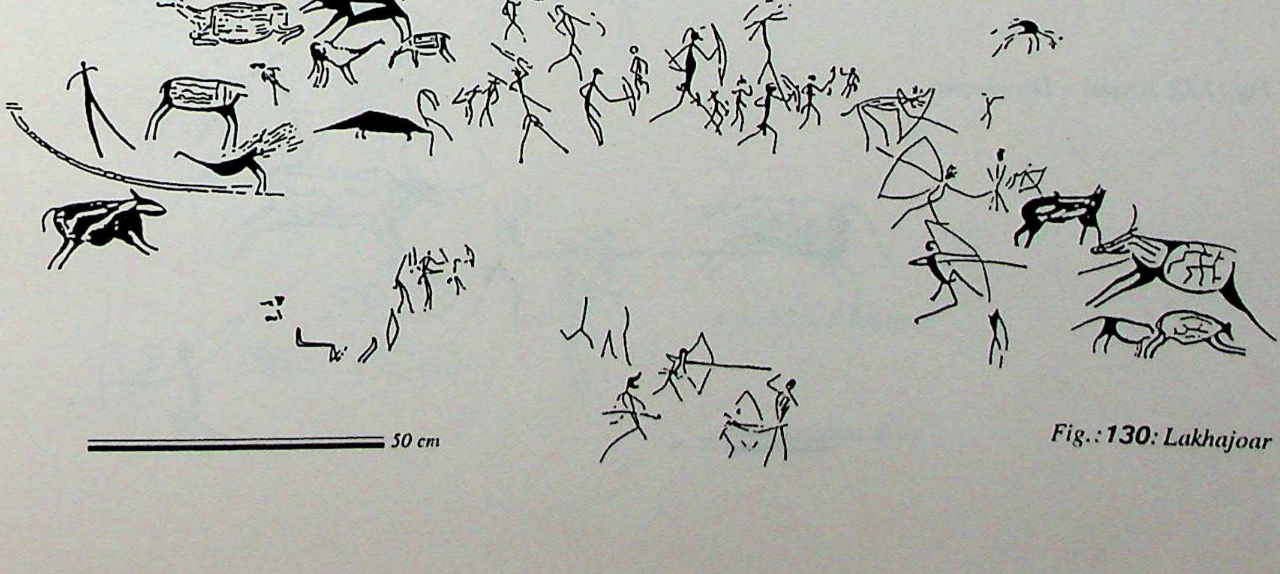


Fig.: ***130****: Lakhajoar*

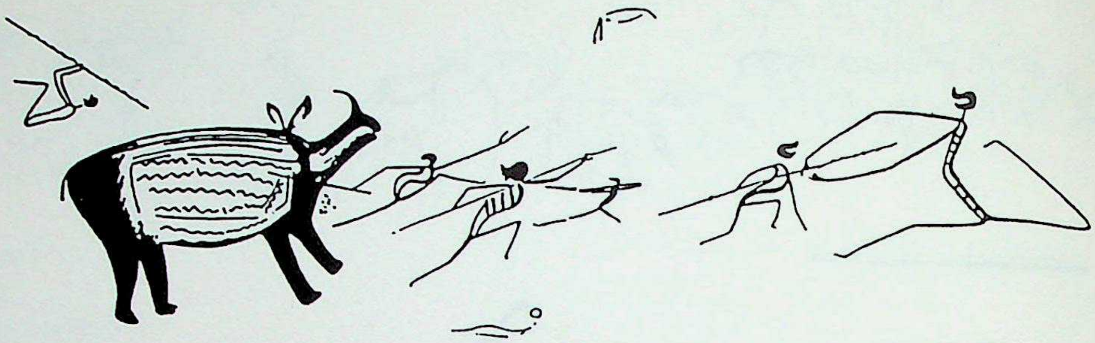


Fig.: ***131****: Bhimbetka*

Fig.: ***132****: Jaora*

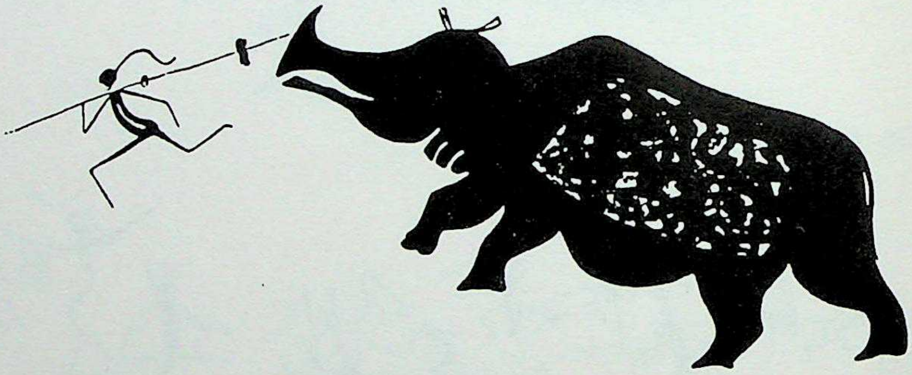
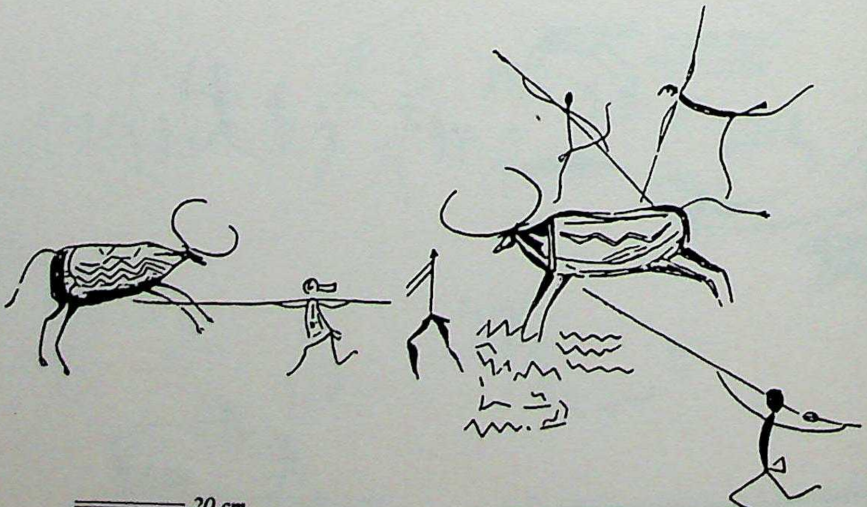


Fig.: ***133****: Bhopal - Dharampuri*



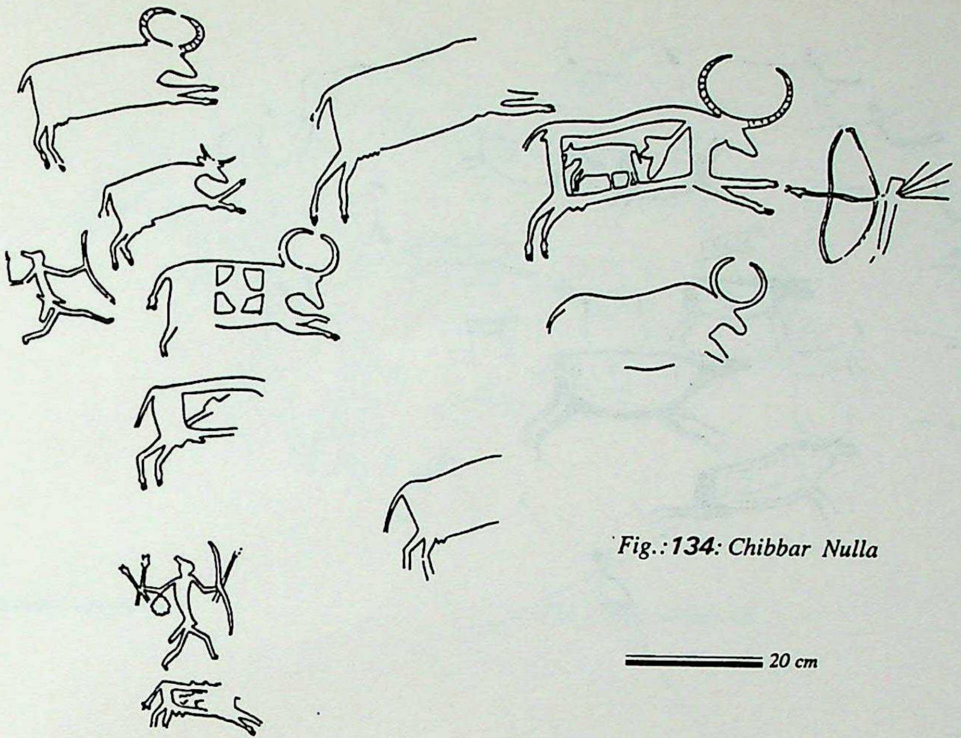


Fig.: ***134****: Chibbar Nulla*

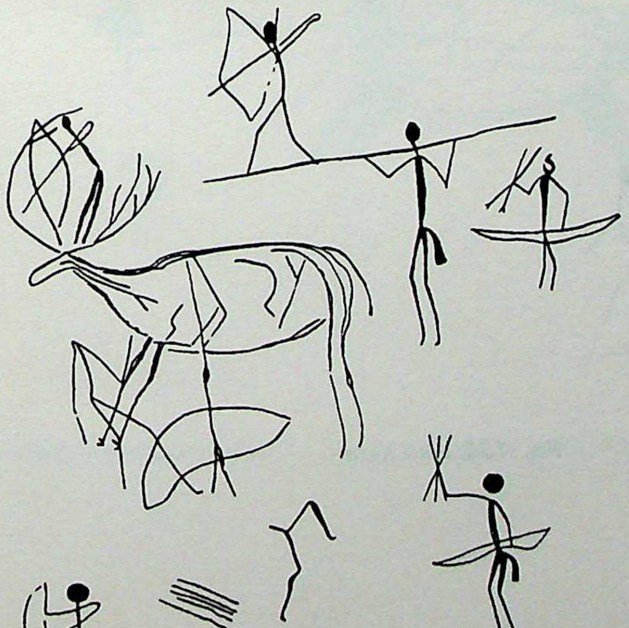


Fig.: ***135****: Bangawan*

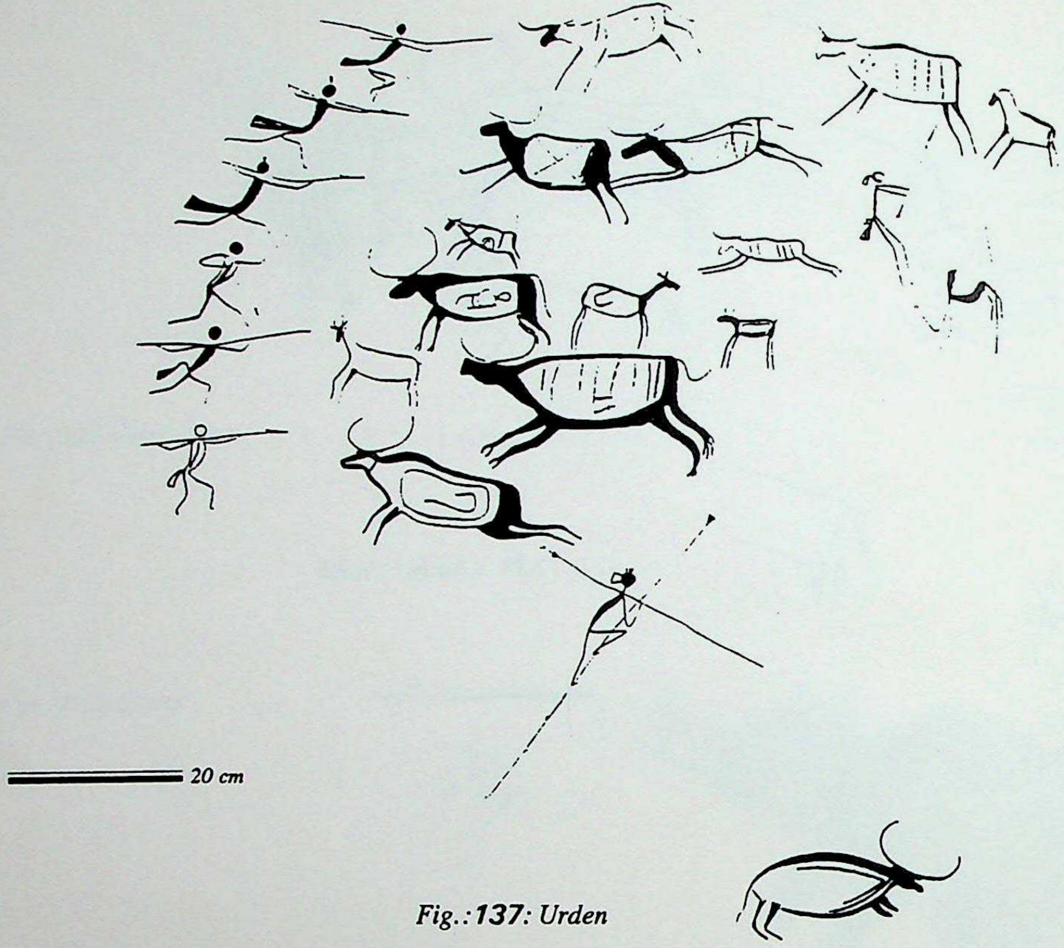


Fig.: **137**: Urden

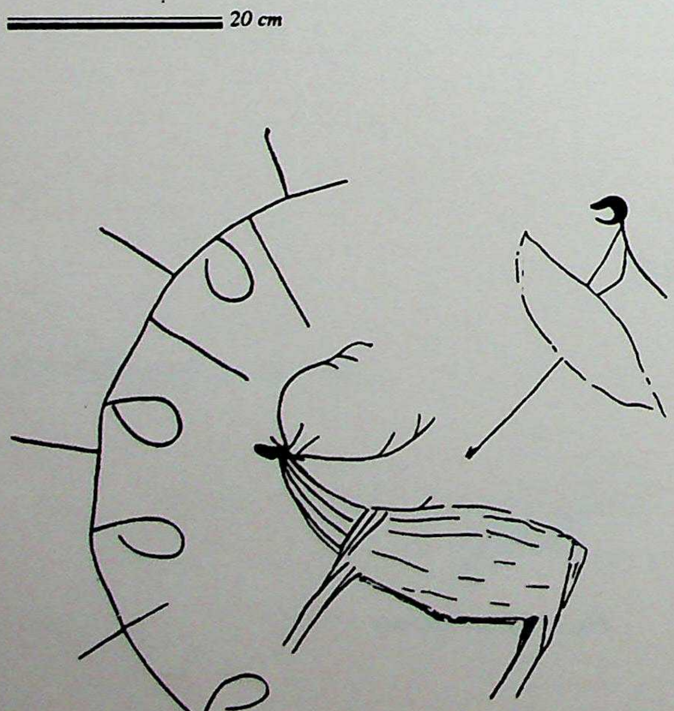


Fig.: **136**: Putli Karar

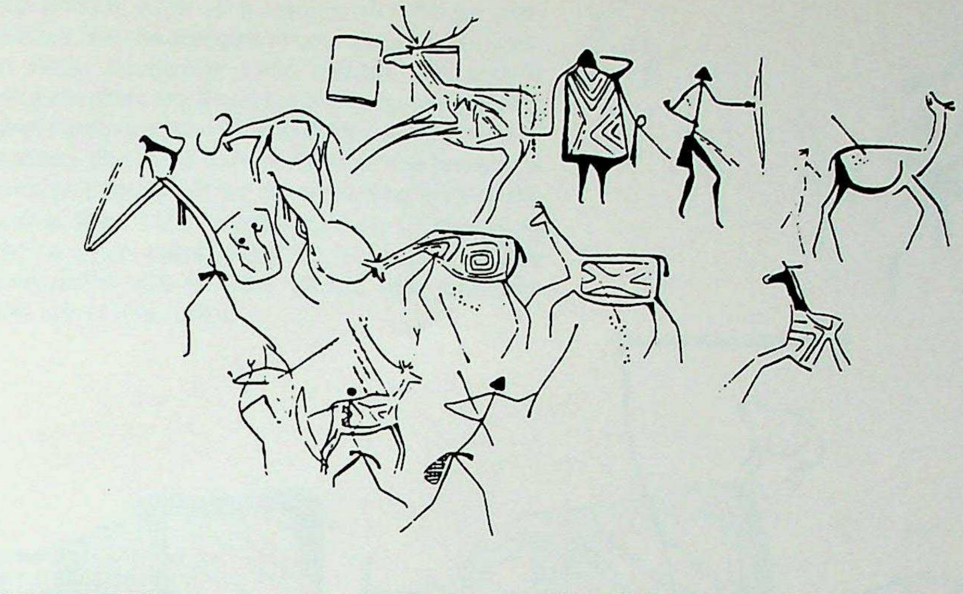


Fig.: ***138****: Lakhajoar*

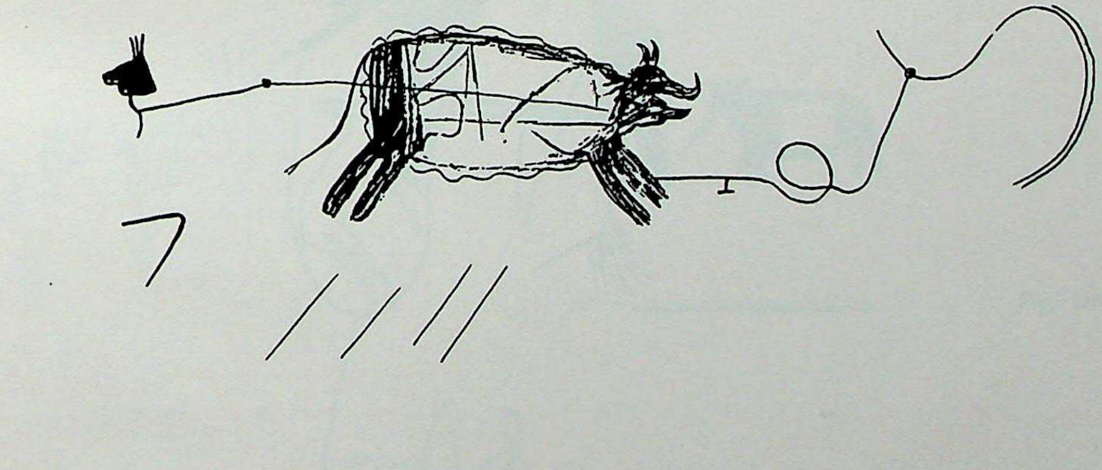


Fig.: ***139****: Firengi*

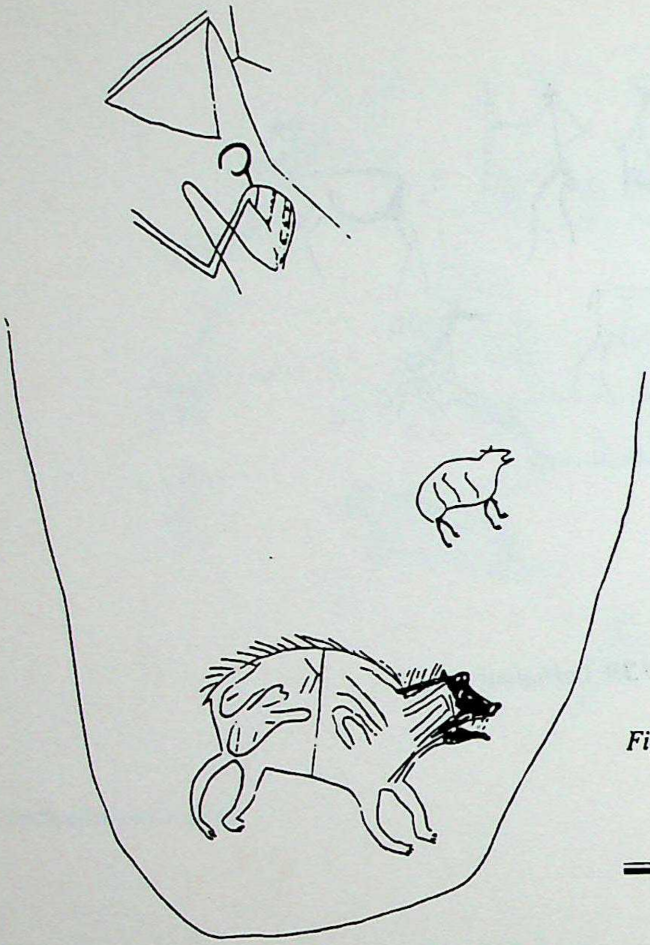


Fig.: ***140****: Urden*

10 cm

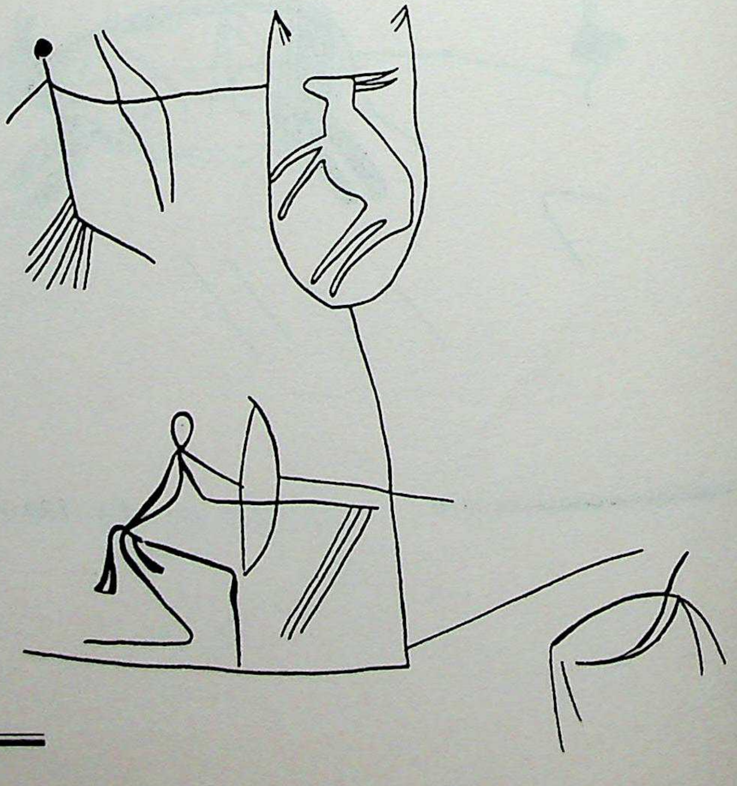


Fig.: ***141****: Urden*

10 cm

Big animals such as elephants and rhinos were hunted. As the pictures show, these hunts were at times dangerous undertakings and several times hunters are shown in precarious situations. One hunting scene in Bhimbetka shows several hunters attacking a rhino. One of the hunters is whirled into the air by the menacing horn of the animal (Fig.: 131). A painting from Chibbar Nulla shows a tiger mauling the arm of a hunter, whose companion tries to ward off the tiger with bow and arrow (Fig.: 49).

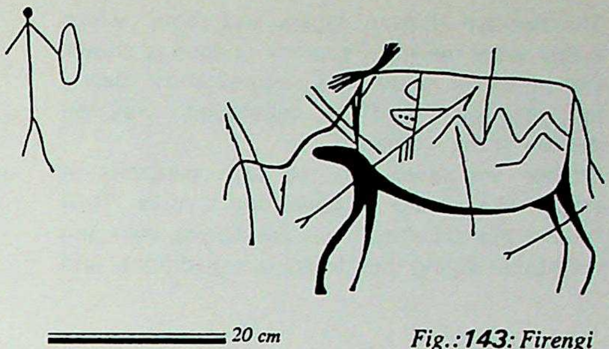


Fig.: ***143:*** *Firengi*

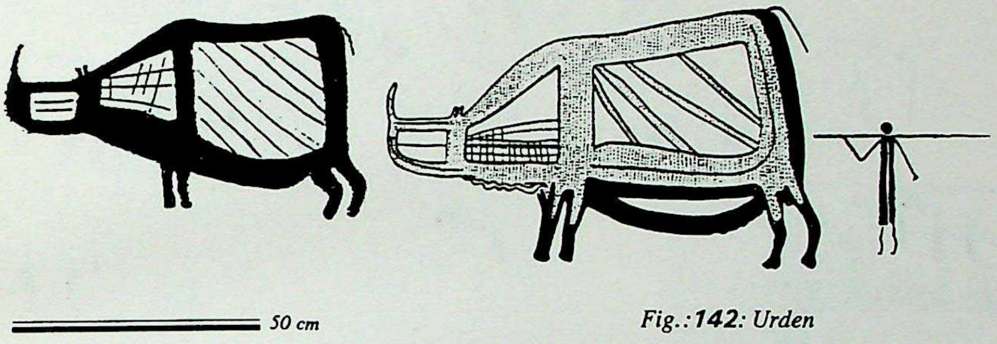


Fig.: ***142:*** *Urden*

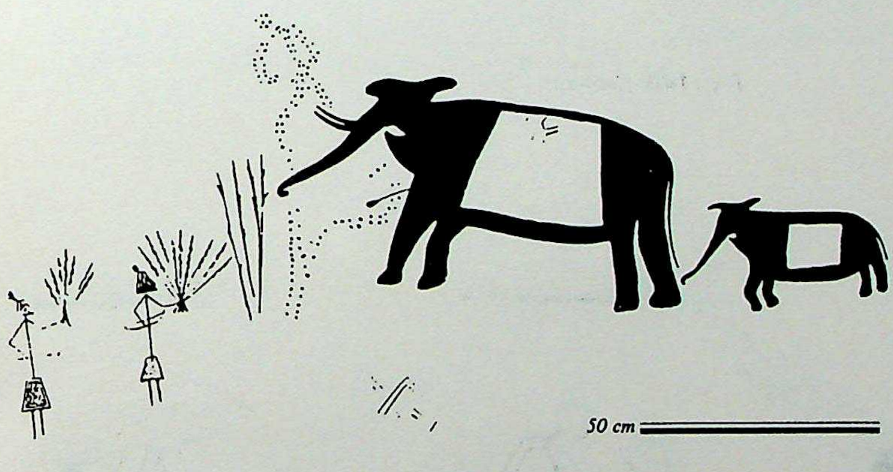


Fig.: ***144:*** *Jaora*

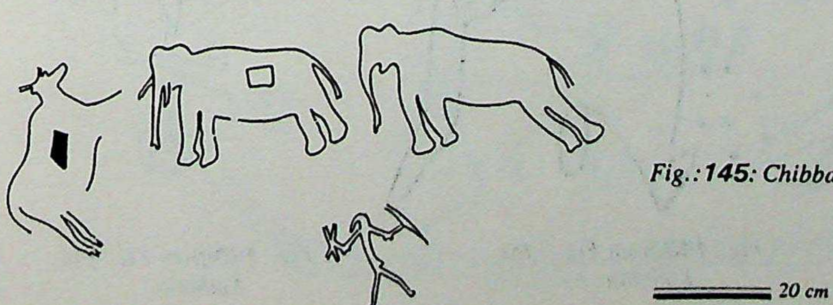


Fig.: ***145:*** *Chibbar Nulla*

The harvest of fruit, tubers and roots, which surely were the main sources of food,is shown comparatively rarely. The pictures show clearly that the daily "hunt" for vegetables was the domain of the women.
Women are never depicted with weapons of attack, like spears or bows and arrows. Their "means of production" was the digging stick and the basket during their foraging expeditions, and the quern and rubberstone at the campsites (Figs.: 51,53,146-51,153,187,211-14,225).

The picture scenes showing fruit gathering are not detailed enough to understand which kinds of fruit and seeds were collected, but they are detailed enough to show that they were collected in basket-loads and processed further on saddle querns (Figs.: 146-51).

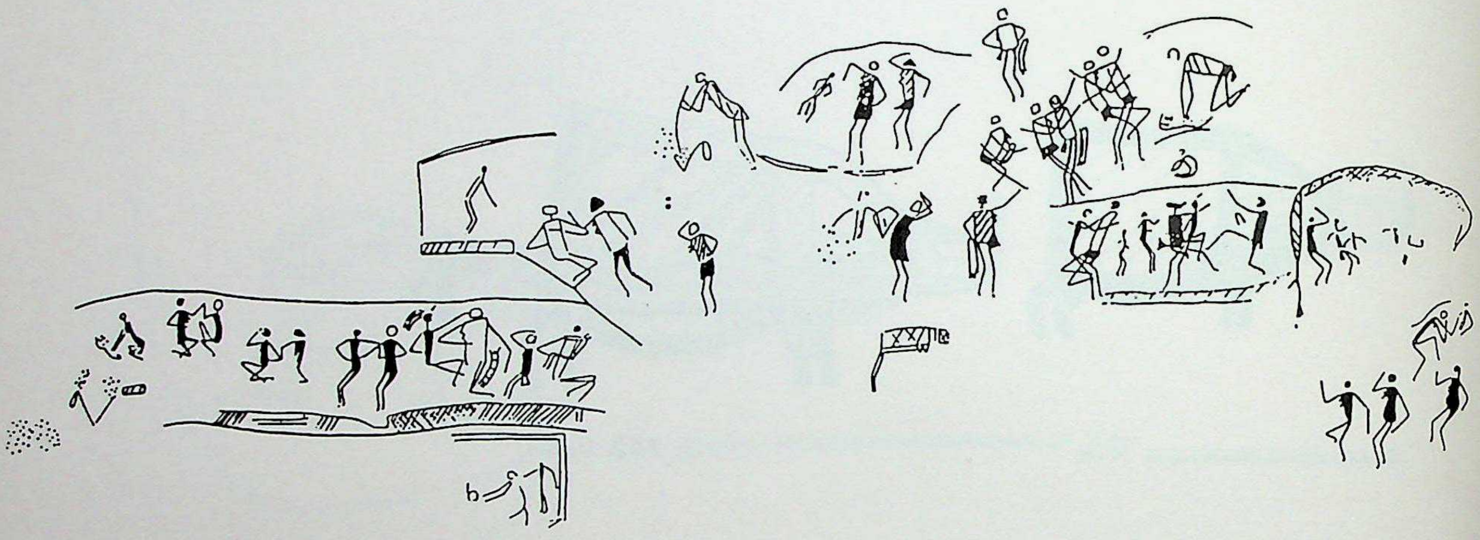


Fig.: ***146****: Kathotia*

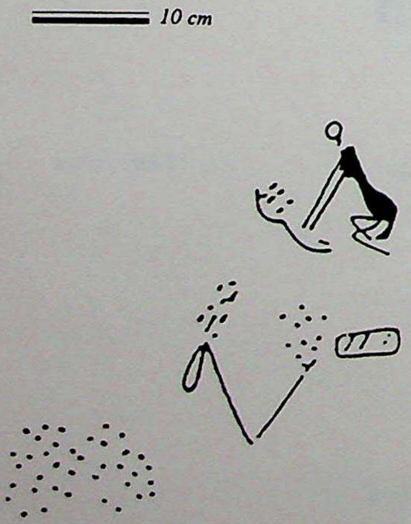


Fig.: ***147****(from Fig.:146): Kathotia*

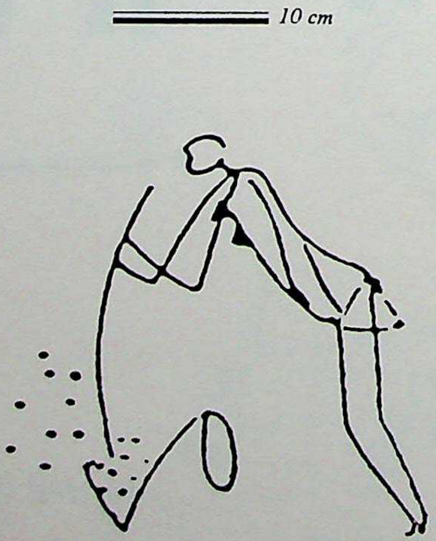


Fig.: ***148****(from Fig.:146): Kathotia*

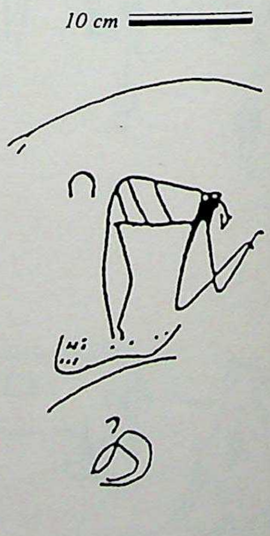


Fig.: ***149****(from Fig.:146): Kathotia*

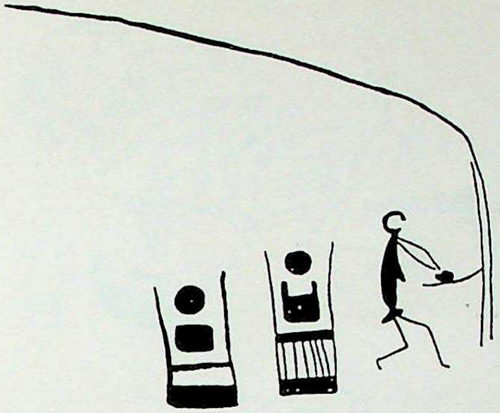
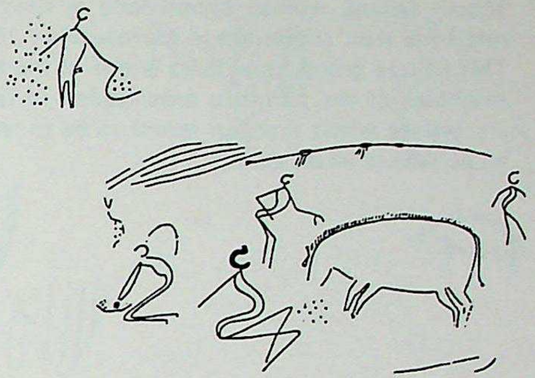


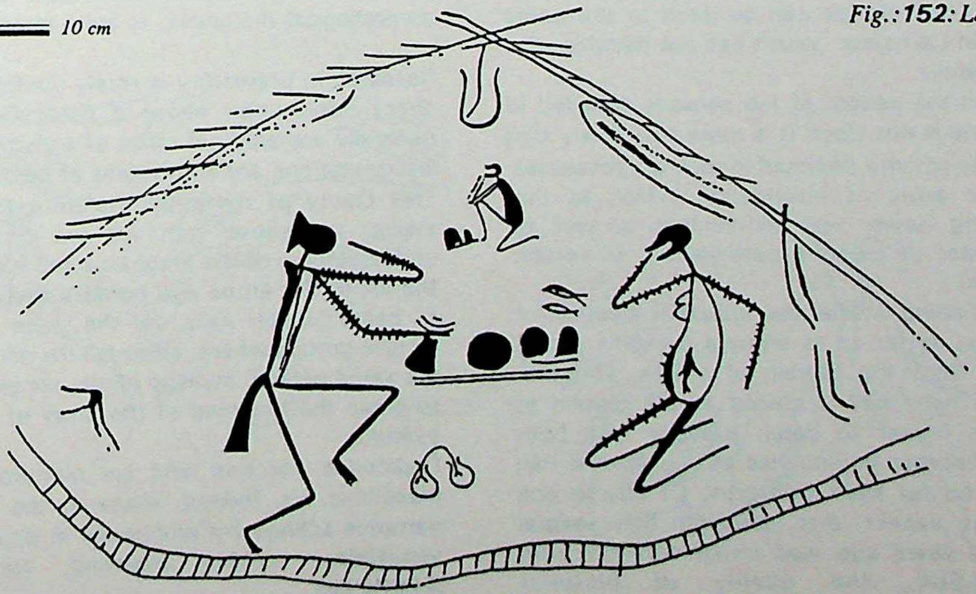
Fig.: ***150****: Kharwai* *10 cm*



20 cm *Fig.:* ***151****: Kathotia*

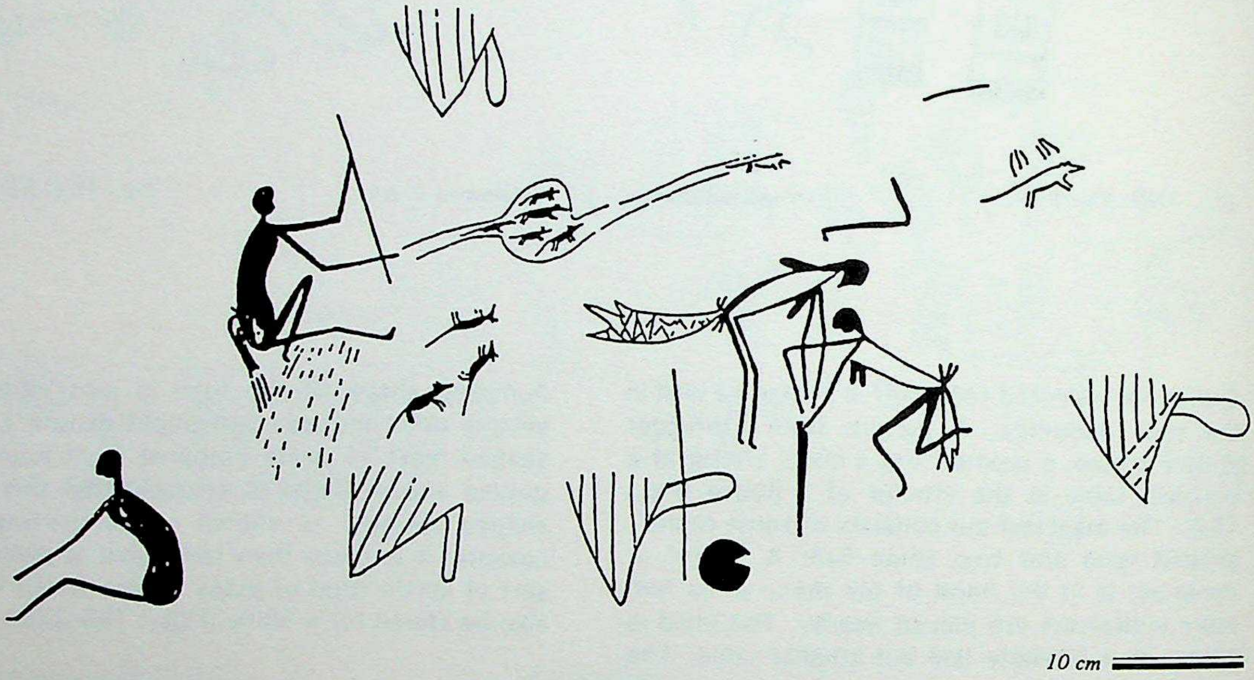
Eating the collected foodstuff is shown as well in the rock paintings. A picture from Lakhajoar shows a man, a woman and a child, sitting at a well-laid table in the interior of a house (Fig.: 152). The meal laid out consists of some round-shaped food and two small fish. A vessel or container is in the hand of the man, while two more containers are placed nearby. The child is sitting at a similarly laid but smaller table. The dumpling shape of the food is also visible in several other pictures and might denote a ball-shaped mass of paste prepared from tubers or ground seeds. Since in two pictures this ball-shaped material is shown in compartmented baskets, it is more than likely that it depicts a sort of staple food of pulpy nature which could also be stored for a while (Figs.: 150,226).

10 cm *Fig.:* ***152****: Lakhajoar*



Besides collecting fruit, women are also depicted collecting small game. A most elaborate scene shows several women cooperating in catching rats from their subterranean burrow (Fig.: 153). This picture group from Jaora is one of the best examples of the narrative organization of rock-art, whose whole function seems to be to relate an activity in all its detail.

*Fig.: **153**: Jaora*



Similarly detailed is the scene of people catching fish from a small pond or waterhole (Figs.: 154-6). This picture can be seen in the same shelter in Lakhajoar which has the painting of a dining family.

Although the gender of the persons depicted in this scene is not clear, it is more than likely that a specific activity depicted in rock-art possesses a whole array of information which to the discerning viewer was self-evident, as well as the gender of persons participating in certain activities.

In this fishing scene the apparent descriptive details go as far as to show a person's pouch hanging from the branch of a tree, an other person's hand net is placed at the ground to allow its owner to catch a turtle with both hands. Another person has strung several fish onto a rod for easy transport. Of course one does not expect that catching fish several thousand years ago was much different from today. Still, the quality of pictorial communication, whereby meaning --or at least parts of it-- can be conveyed over such chronological distances, is quite remarkable.

Research in prehistory is rarely confronted with direct information about a particular activity; generally we only get relics of activities, whose interpretations are ambivalent at best.

This clarity of narration therefore tempts the viewer to believe that we are close to the understanding of the ambitions and intentions of the art of the stone age hunters and gatherers. A belief which fails in the case of many picture-groups where, although the narrative is in the same general stylistic idiom, we are not able to grasp the meaning of the array of signs and symbols.

Depictions of this kind are numerous in the mesolithic art. Indeed, many of the "rational" narrative scenes are embedded in larger picture sequences, whose meaning we cannot disentangle.

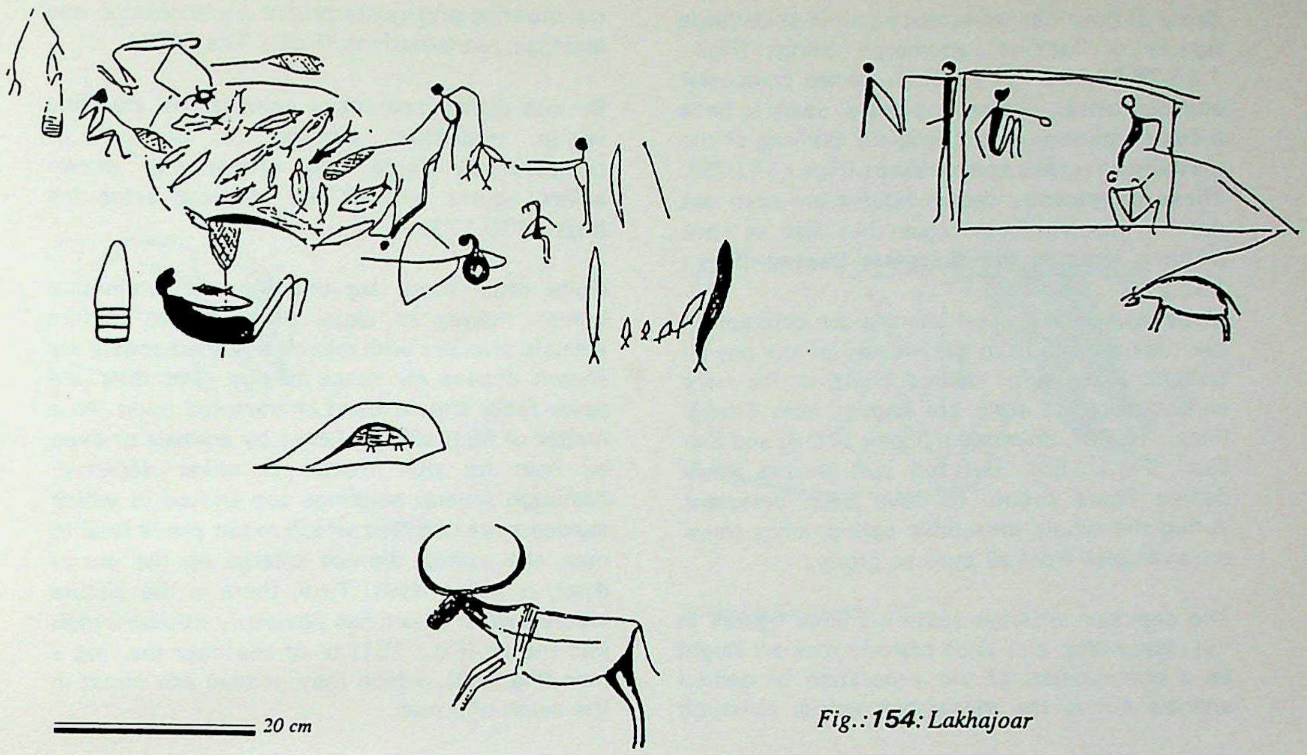
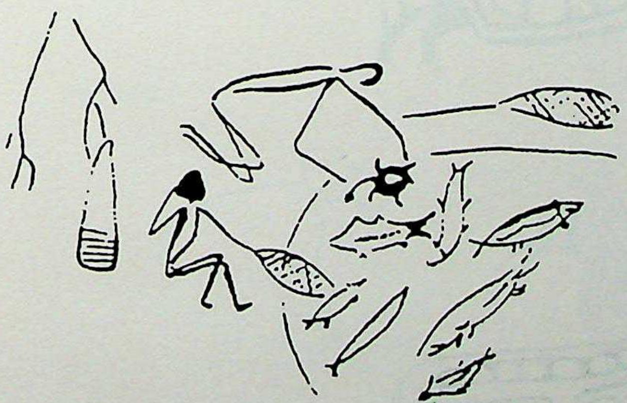


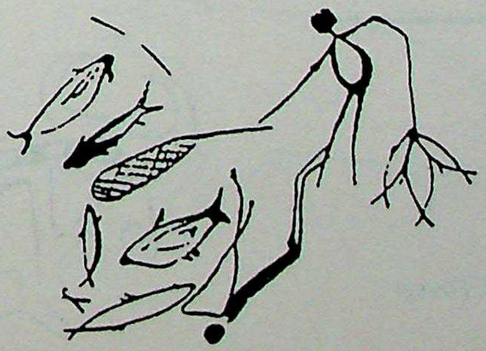
Fig.: **154**: Lakhajoar

Fig.: **156**(from Fig.:154): Lakhajoar

Fig.: **155**(from Fig.:154): Lakhajoar

10 cm





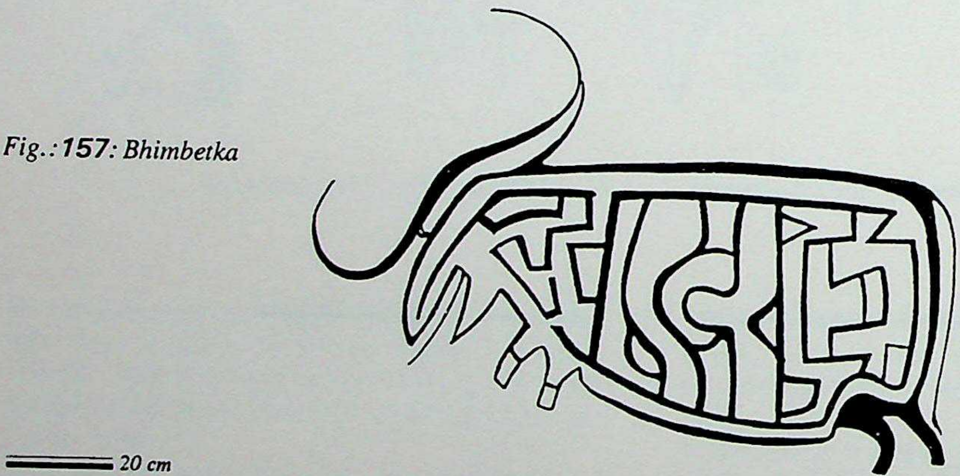
Some of the most prominent pictures-show large figures of "deified" zoomorph beings (Figs.: 1,16,78,80,195,157-79,221). Deified composite animals, closely resembling boars, seem to have a central position in the religious thinking of the mesolithic hunters and gatherers (Figs.: 173-79). These prominently drawn figures are seen not only in the Vindhya Region but also at rock painting sites in the Southern Deccan (Figs.: 162,271).
Large figures of deified animals are common in the rock-art region in the vicinity of the city of Bhopal. Pictures of deified boars in the very earliest rock-art style are known from Firengi (Figs.: 167-8), Bhimbetka (Figs.: 176-8) and Bari Dant (Fig.: 163). But the cult around these deified boars seems to have been prevalent during the whole mesolithic period, since there are examples from all stylistic groups.

The depiction of large solitary animal figures in the chalcolithic and even historic rock-art might be a continuation of the veneration of deified animals during the mesolithic period, although transformed and reinterpreted by economic and ideologic reorientations (Figs.: 373,376).

Besides deified composite animals, we also find within mesolithic pictures a number of comparatively large and prominently drawn animal figures without any fantastic attributes (Figs.: 170,173).

Quite often there are drawings of diminutive human figures in close proximity to deified animals. Hunters with microlith barbed spears are shown chased by these beings, but they are never really shown killed or trampled upon. As a matter of fact, killing of man by animals or even by man for that matter is never depicted. Although several paintings are known in which incidents are depicted which might prove fatal to man, the painter did not enlarge on the act of dying or killing itself. True, there is the picture where a rhino's horn has obviously thrown a man into the air (Fig.: 131) or of the tiger mauling a man (Fig.: 49), which may or may not result in the death of a man.

Fig.: ***157****: Bhimbetka*



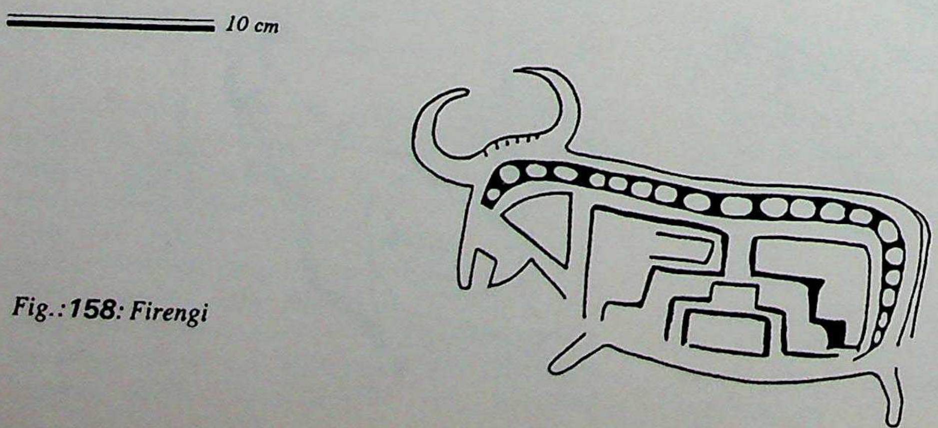


Fig.: ***158****: Firengi*

Fig.: **159**

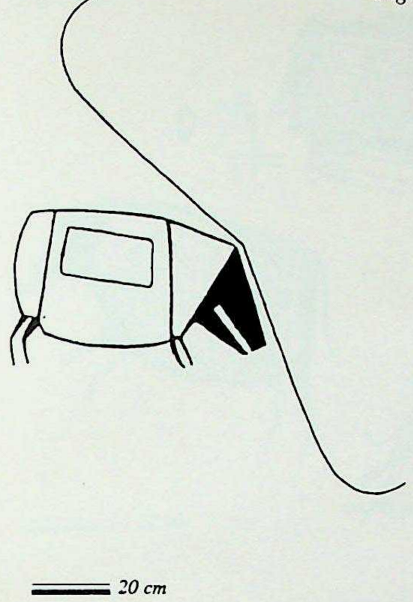
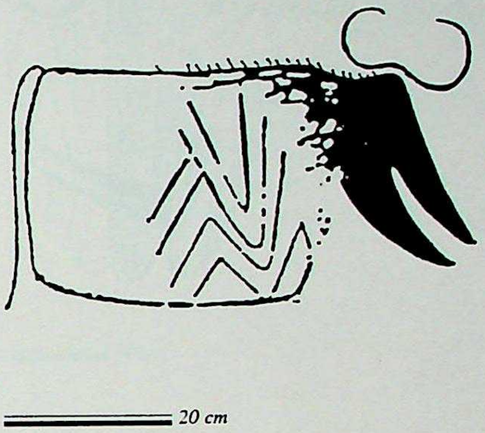


Fig.: **160**



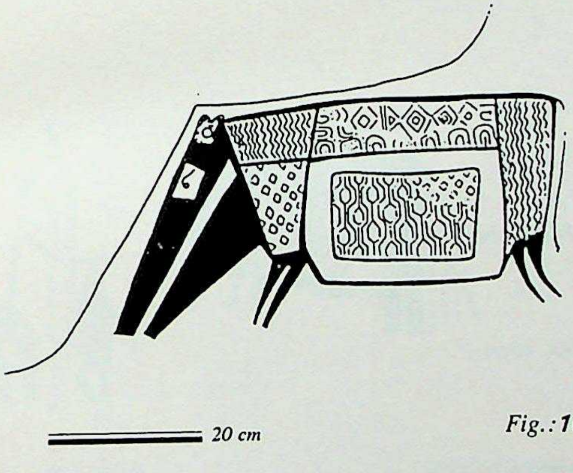
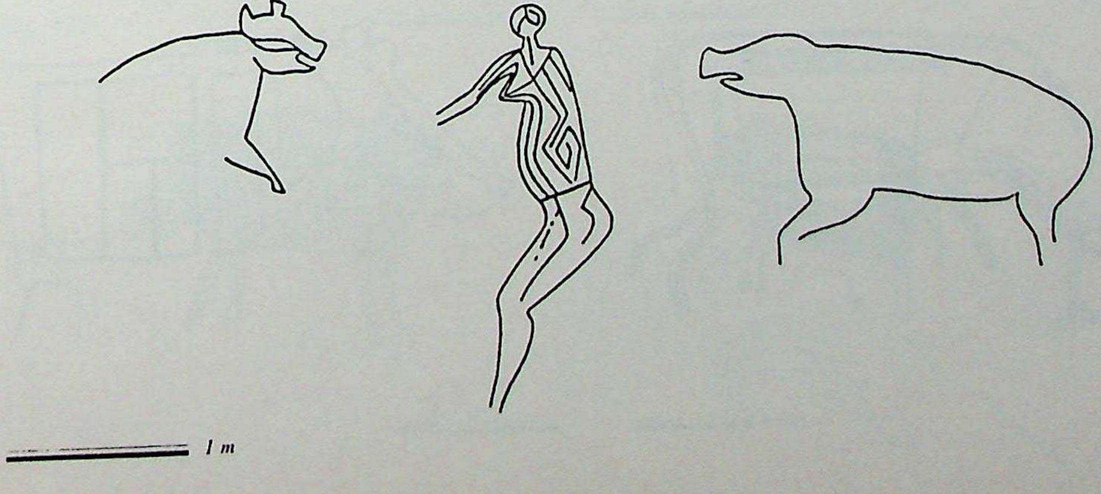


Fig.: **159***: Bhimbetka*
Fig.: **160***(from Fig.:221):*
Lakhajoar
Fig.: **161***: Bhimbetka*
Fig.: **162***: Benakal Forest -*
Hire Benakal

Fig.: **161**

Fig.: **162**



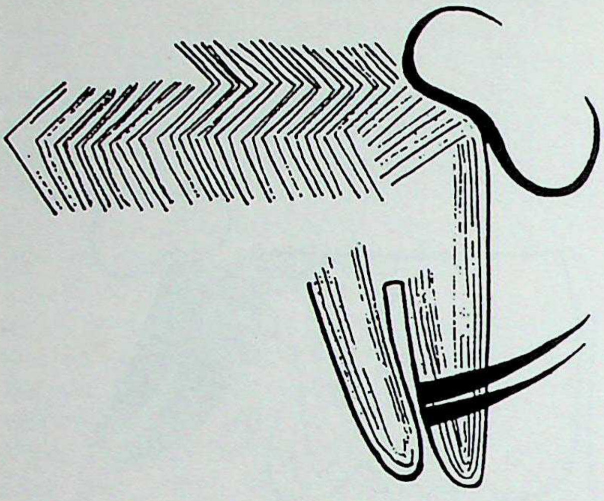


Fig.: ***163****: Bari Dant*

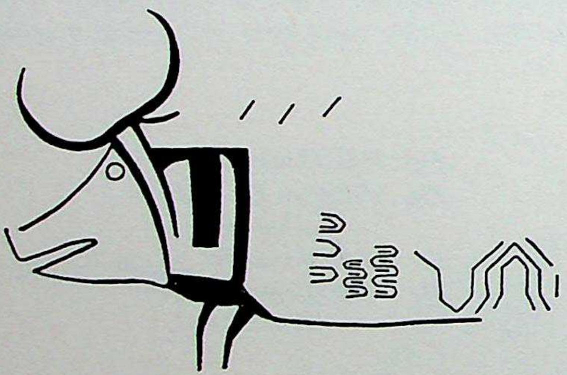


Fig.: ***164****: Bhimbetka*

Fig.: ***165****: Bhimbetka*

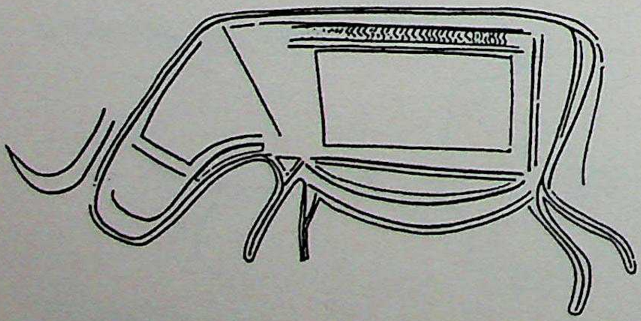


Fig.: ***166****: Jaora*

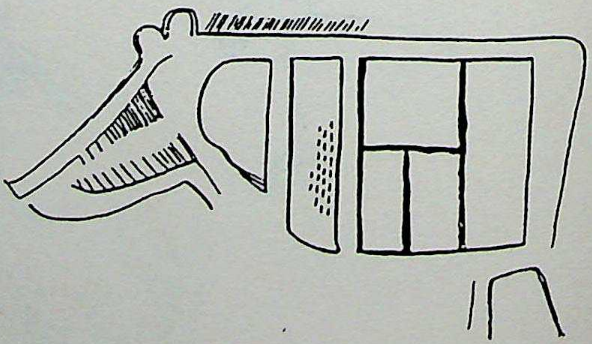


*Fig.:***167**

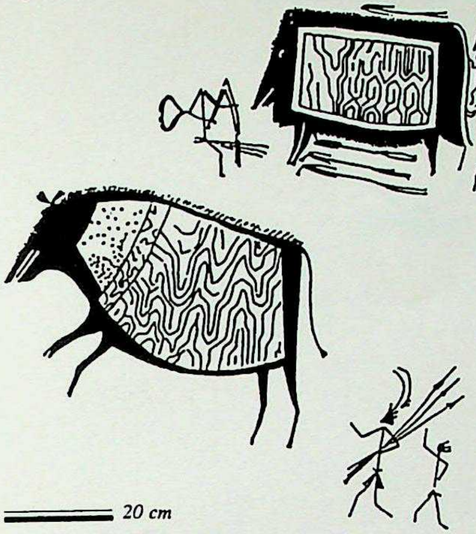


*Fig.:***168**

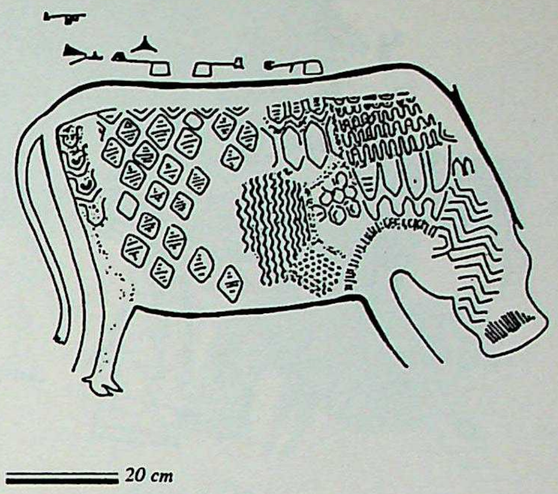


*Fig.:***167***: Firengi*
*Fig.:***168***: Firengi*
*Fig.:***169***: Firengi*
*Fig.:***170***: Bhojpur*
*Fig.:***171***: Abchand*

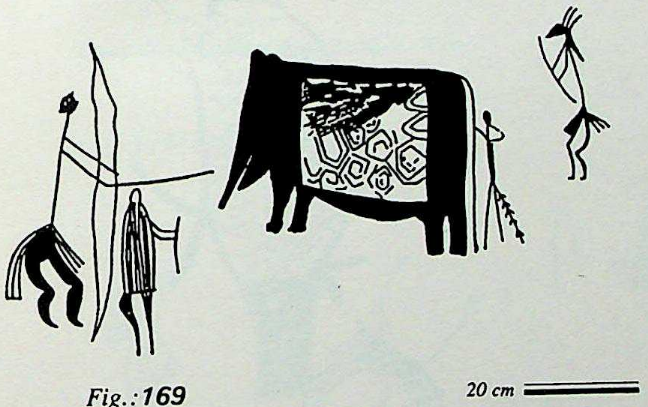


*Fig.:***169**

*Fig.:***170**

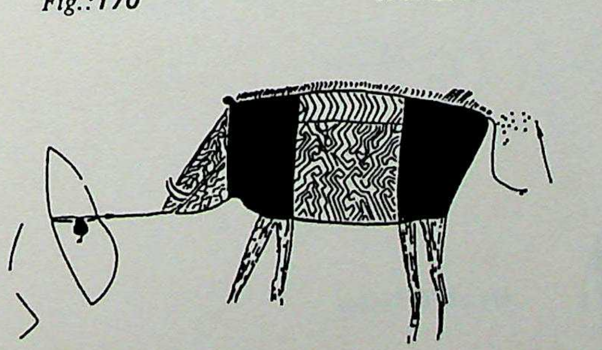


*Fig.:***171**

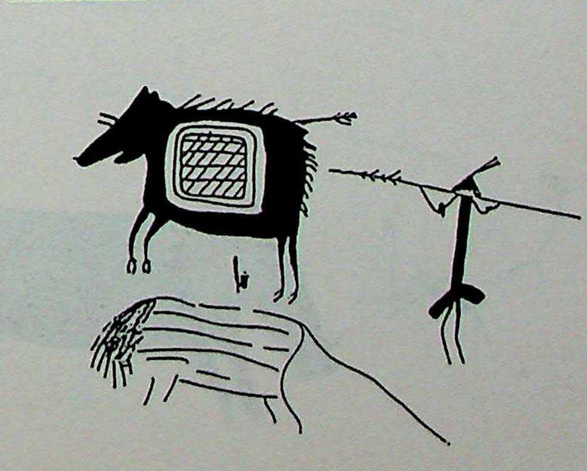
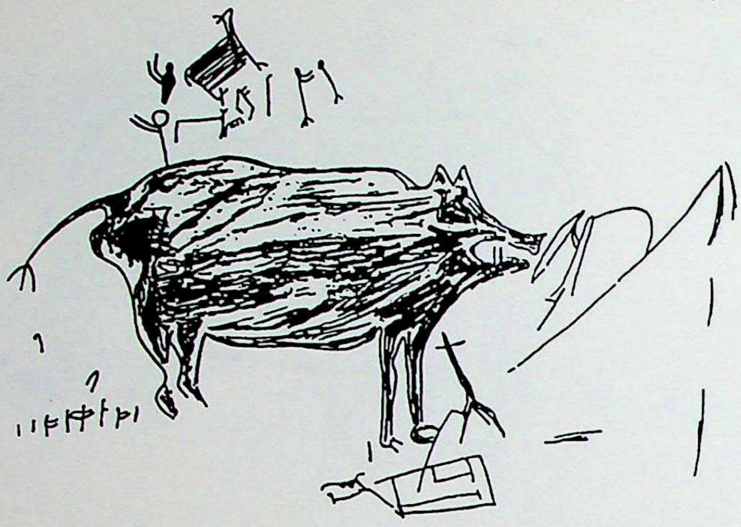


Fig.: ***172****(from Fig.:1): Baldharia*



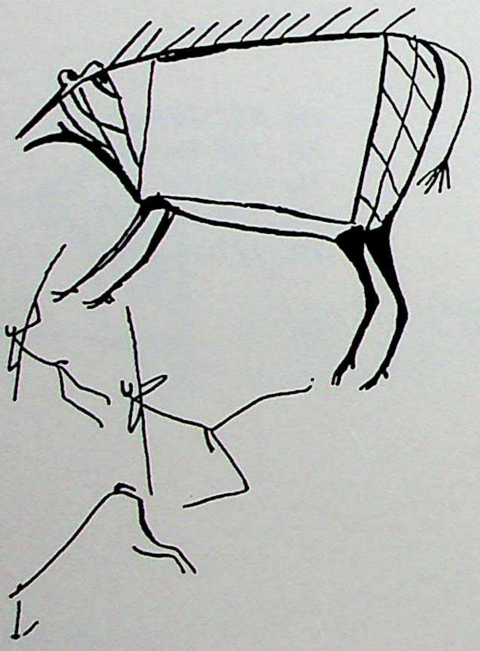
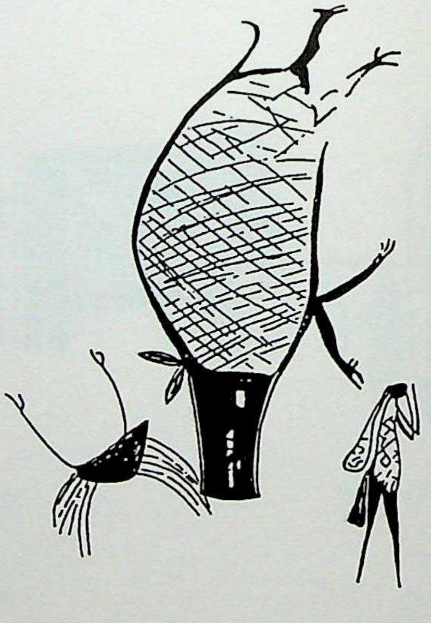


Fig.: ***173****: Lakhajoar*

Fig.: ***174****: Bhimbetka*



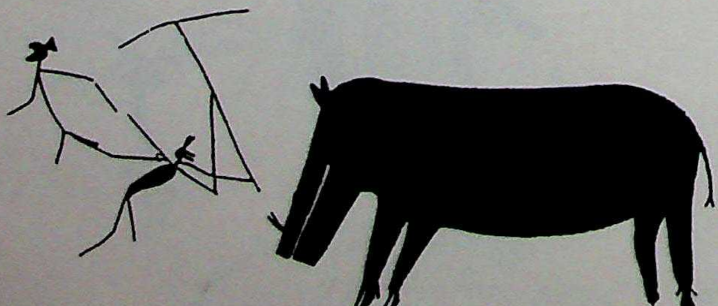


Fig.: ***175****: Urden*

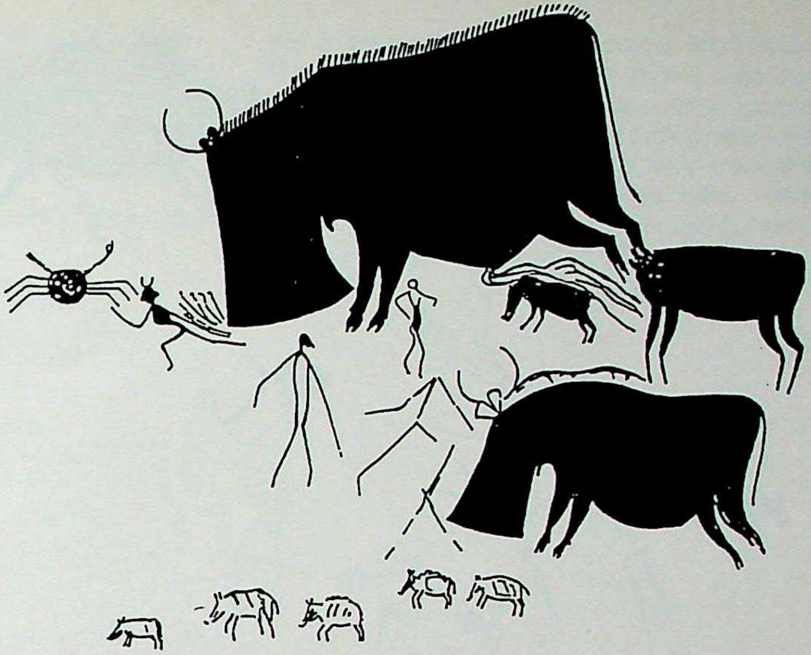
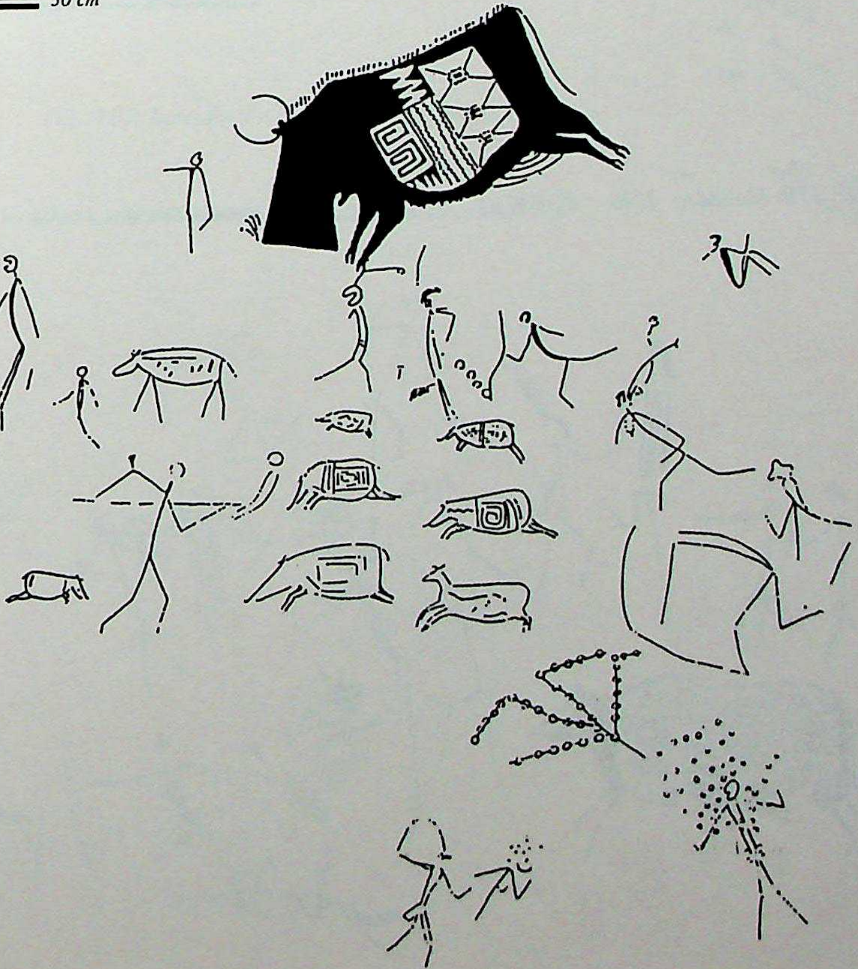


Fig.: ***176****: Bhimbetka*

1 m

50 cm

Fig.: ***177****: Bhimbetka*



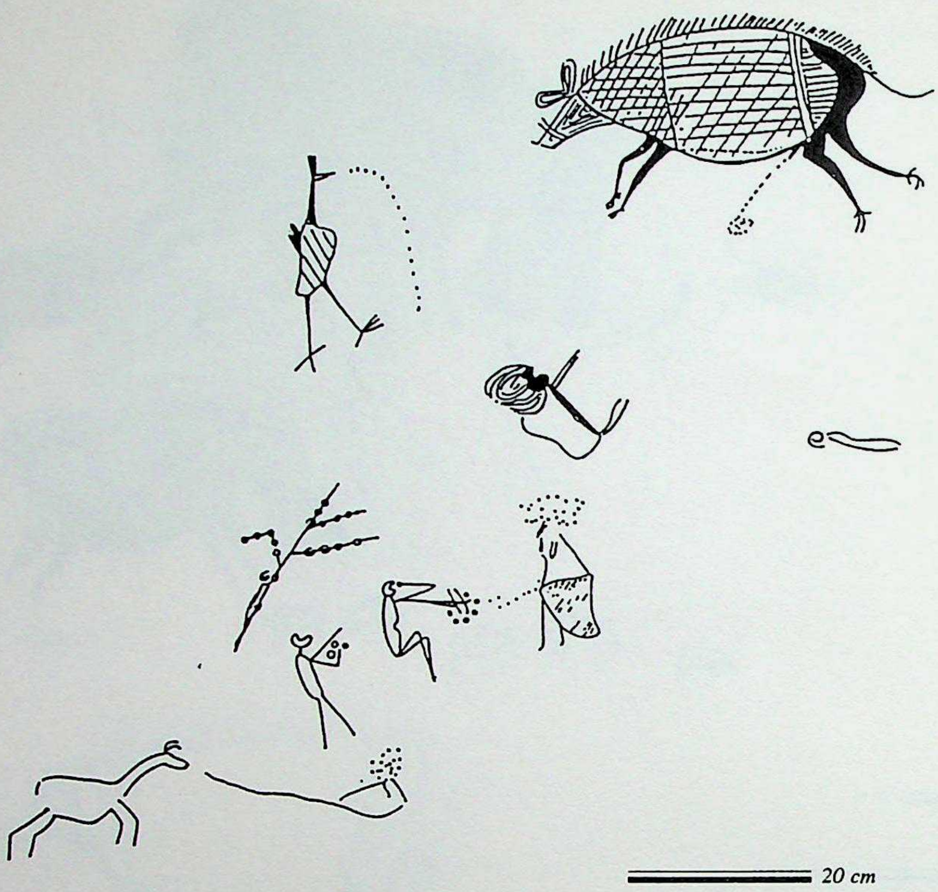
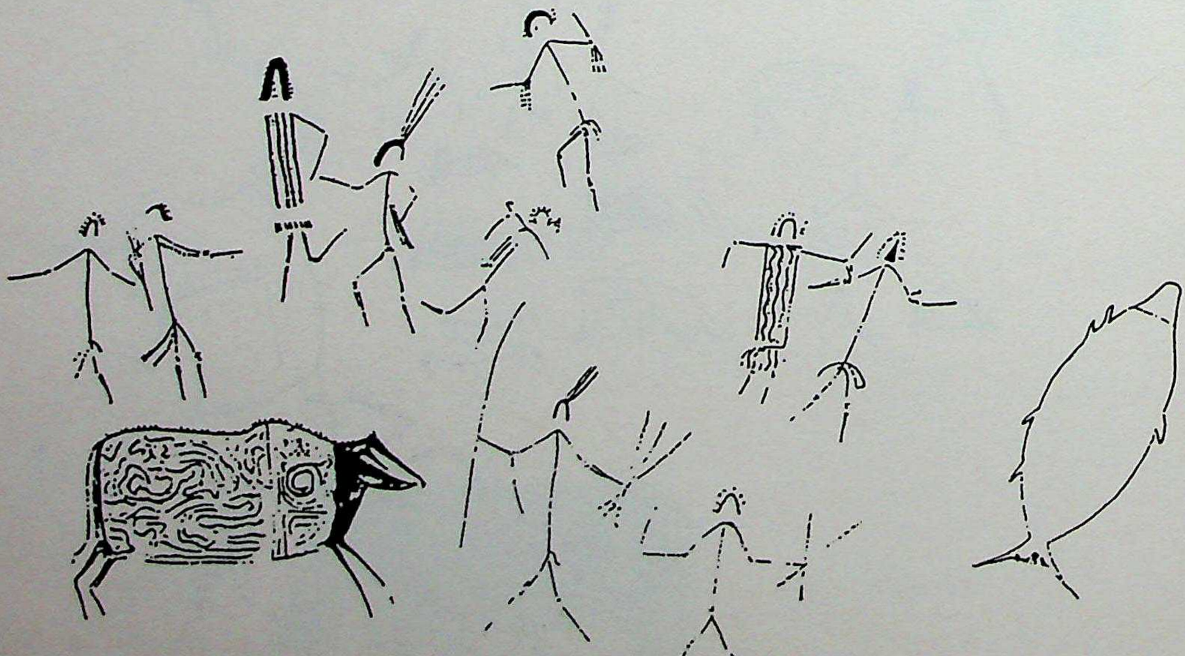


Fig.: ***178****: Bhimbetka*

Fig.: ***179****: Mahadeo Hills - Bori West*



The actual killing of man by man is never shown. I know only two scenes where antagonistic groups of bow-men are sending their arrows against each other (Figs.: 180-2). Spears or arrows are not shown penetrating bodies of foes, nor are fighters seen falling.

Even later rock-art pictures rarely show the killing of persons.

Within the large body of chalcolithic art, I know of only a single painting which shows a person obviously being struck down by another person with an axe (Fig.: 439). Fighters falling under the arrows of their foes are known only from the historic paintings in the Mahadeo Hills. There indeed, arrows are seen stuck through fighters' necks and bodies (Figs.: 622,627).

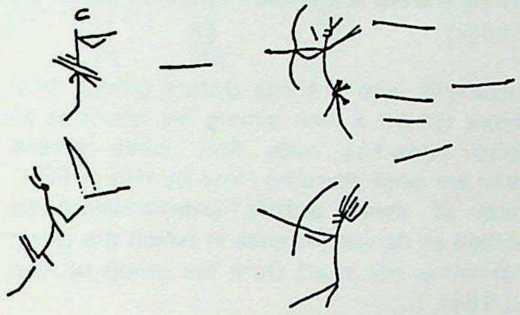


*Fig.:**180**: Gupha Masir*

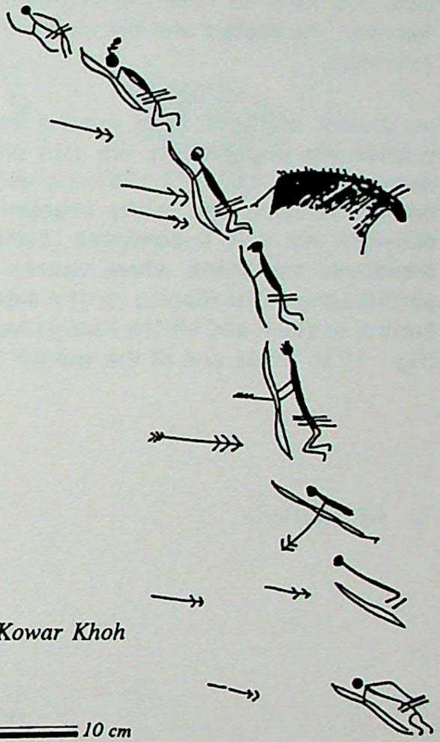


*Fig.:**181**: Kowar Khoh*

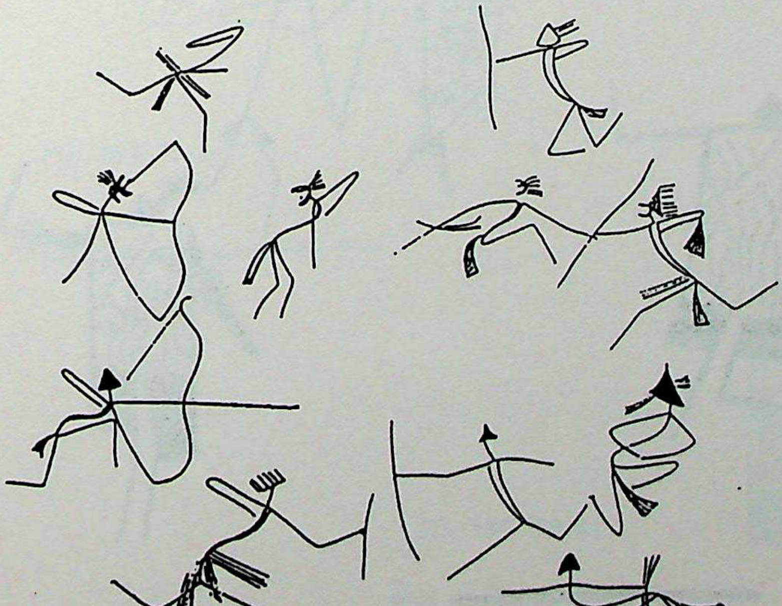


*Fig.:**182**: Lakhajoar*

Cooperation of two or more persons is frequently shown in meosolithic rock-art. Depictions of large hunting expeditions sometimes show more than a dozen beaters and hunters moving obviously along well marked guidelines. It is tempting to interpret particular duties also in a hierarchy of social relations, but in the absence of further information and more exacting studies it is impossible to be more precise on this subject. Still, we have to note the pictorial difference between the beaters and the much larger drawn bow man.

In several of these large hunting expeditions women carrying baskets are also prominently depicted (Figs.: 105,122,129). Scenes of several women foraging and jointly engaged in other activities are well documented. Earlier I have mentioned the scene where women are seen participating in the digging up of a subterranean burrow to catch and kill the rodents hiding there (Fig.: 153). While one of the women digs open one of the entrances of the burrow, another is guarding the second opening.

Cooperation between man and woman on the other hand is very rarely shown. This is not surprising, given the well defined division of labour.
In several pictures where women and men figure together, no rational interpretation of their cooperation is possible (Figs.:16,74,77,105,194, 127,129,138,151,183,193,269,270-1). Some of these scenes are cryptic and best described as "cultic".

For example, one of these picture groups from Kathotia shows a man aiming his arrow at an uprightly standing huge fish, while several women are seen standing close by (Fig.: 183).
Several of these picture groups could be described as dancing scenes in which the group of women is set apart from the group of men (Fig.: 184).

Fig.: ***183****: Kathotia*

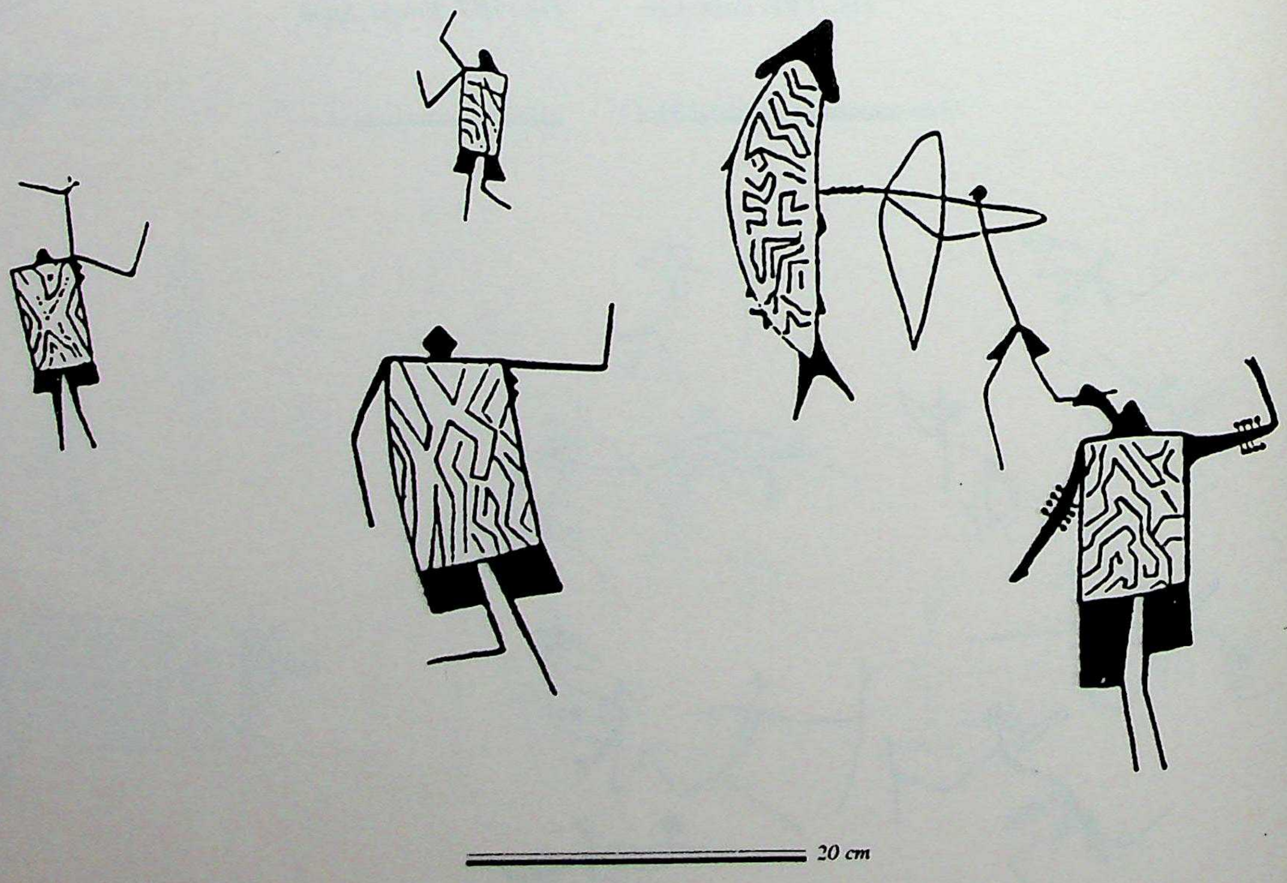
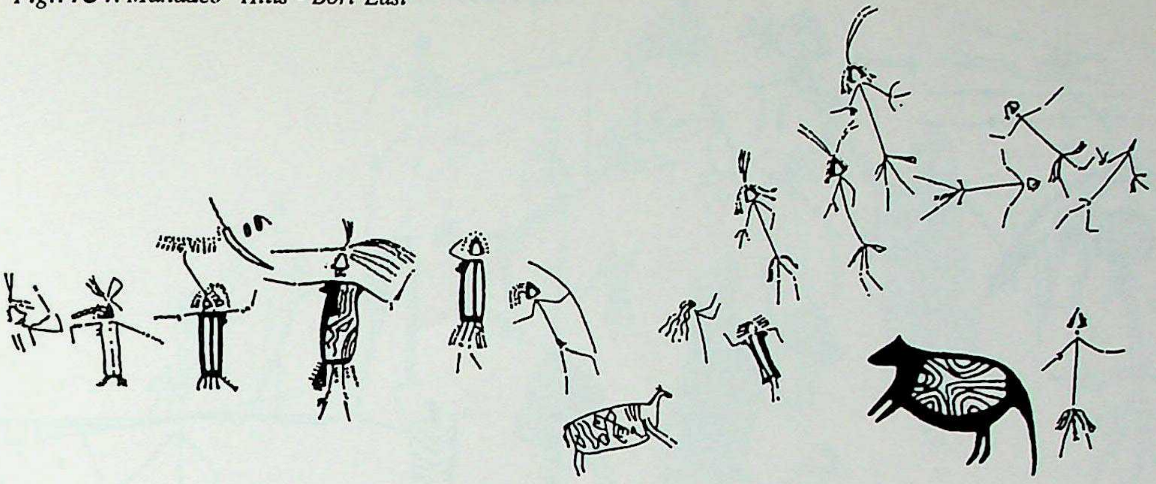


Fig.: ***184****: Mahadeo Hills - Bori East*



50 cm

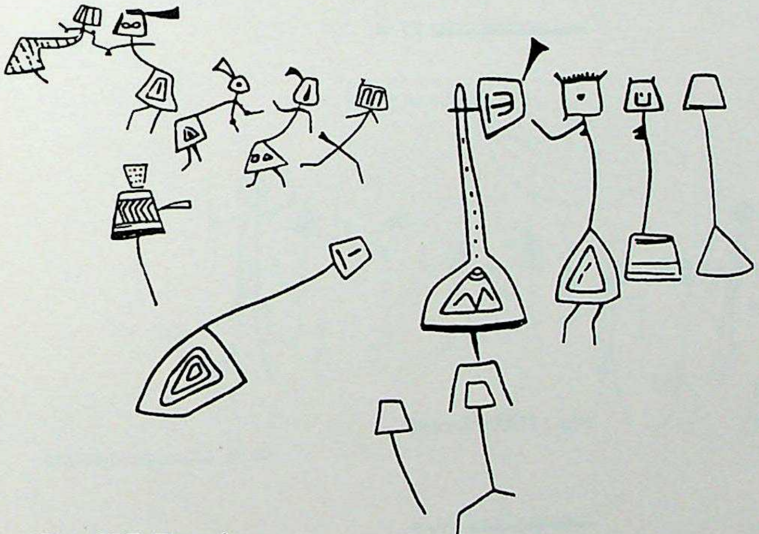


Fig.: ***185****: Firengi*

10 cm

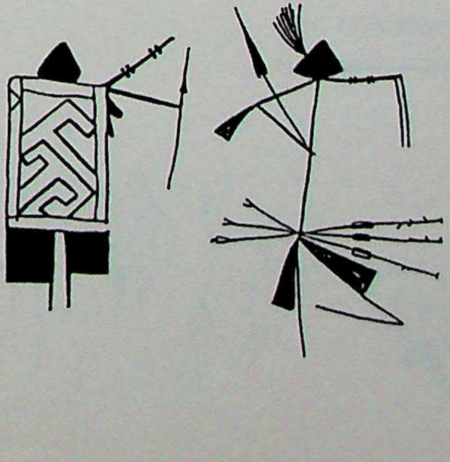
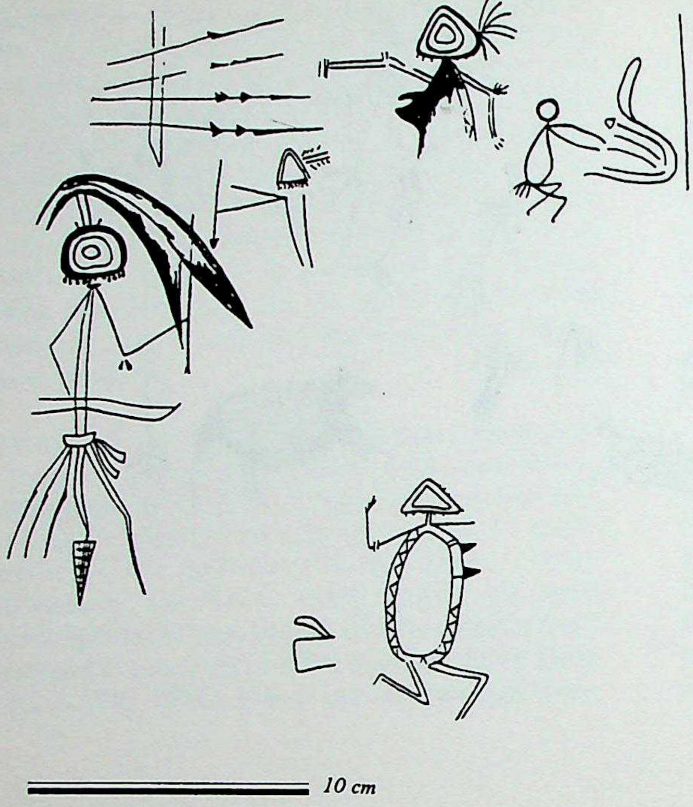


Fig.: ***186****: Firengi*

10 cm

Fig.: ***187****: Firengi*



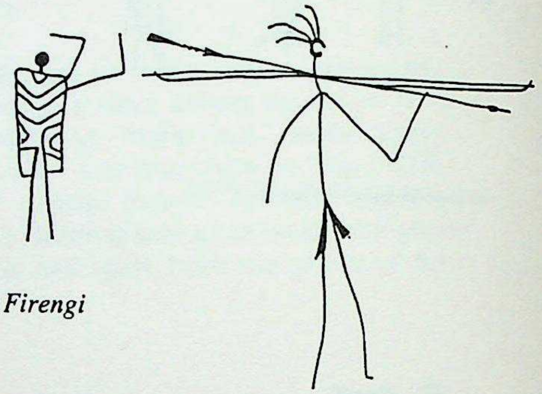


Fig.: ***188****: Firengi*

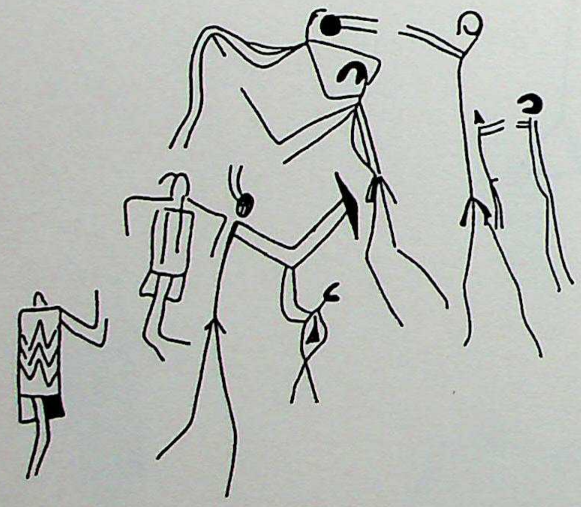
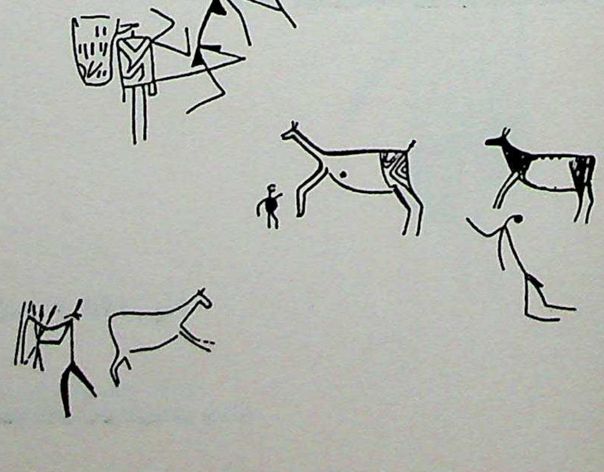


Fig.: ***189****: Firengi*

Fig.: ***190****: Firengi*



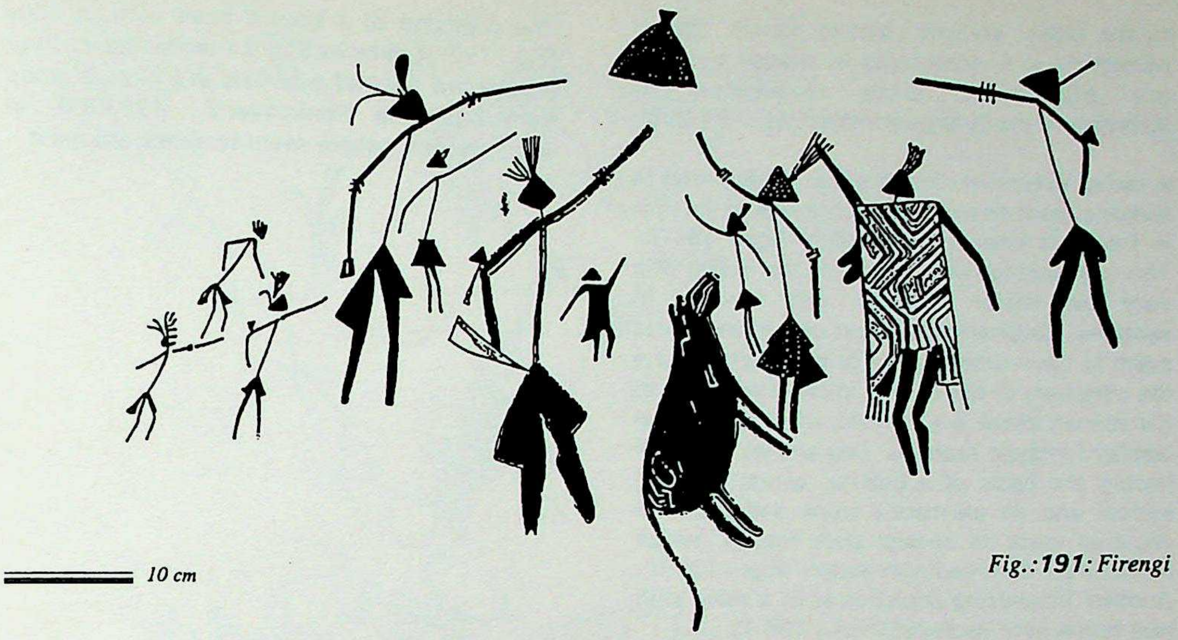


Fig.: ***191****: Firengi*

Fig.: ***192****: Mahadeo Hills - Bori West*

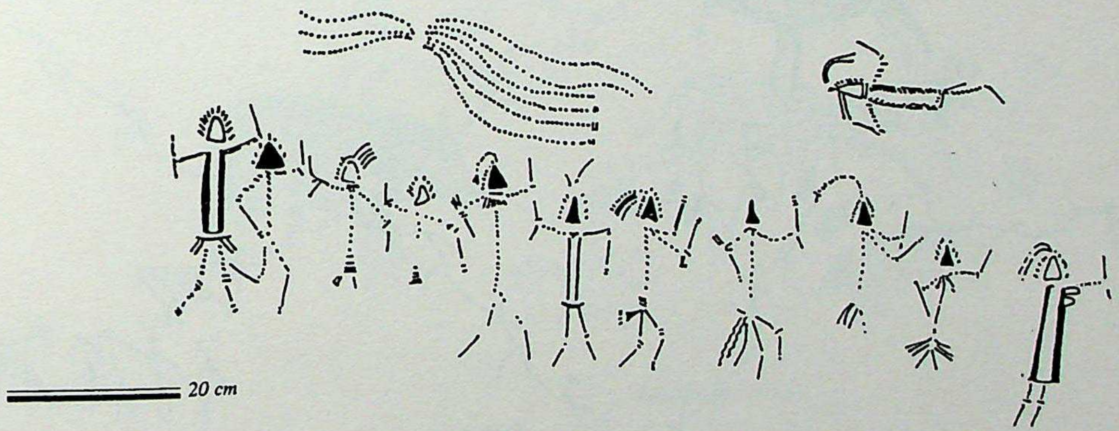
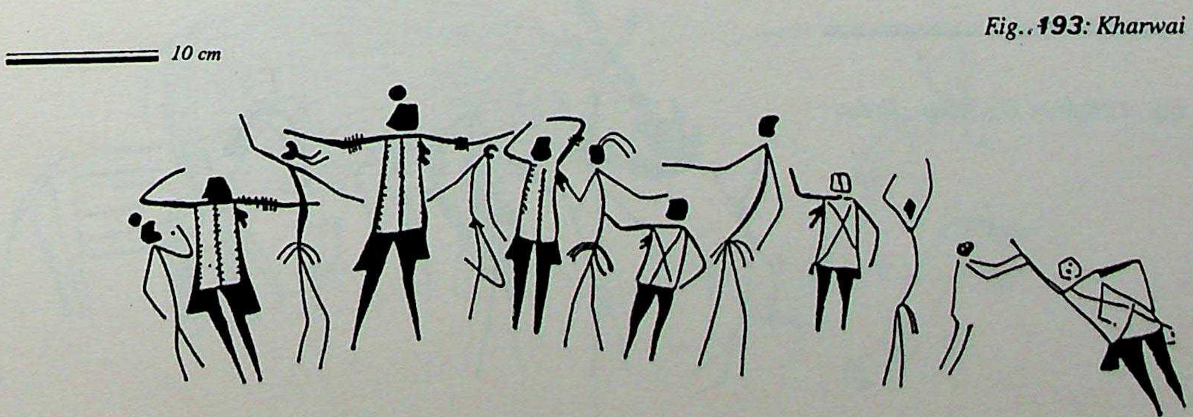


Fig.. ***193****: Kharwai*



In the oldest stylistic painting groups, files of human figures, sometimes in strange postures are placed in large assemblies of disproportionately large animals (Figs.: 194-209).

A rather extensive picture group of long rows of humans, bent down to touch the heel of the man in front are known from Urden (Figs.: 194-7). This composition was found on the ceiling of a very low shelter and has only survived in sections. Originally the chain of human figures seem to have formed more or less a circle along the periphery of the ceiling. In close proximity to the human chain are animals, of which several display fantastic features. One animal, although having the body of a buffalo, sports deer-like antlers and an elephant's trunk and tusks, is depicted close to several stick figures, which similarly are crowned with antlers (Figs.: 194-5). Another interesting depiction is of a rhino with two horns over its snout (Figs.: 196-7).

The depiction of a bovine head without body (Fig.: 196) is reminiscent of a similar depiction of a detached head of a buffalo in a picture group from Kathothia (Neumayer,E., 1983:57), in which several people seem to dance around it.

*Fig.:**194**: Urden*

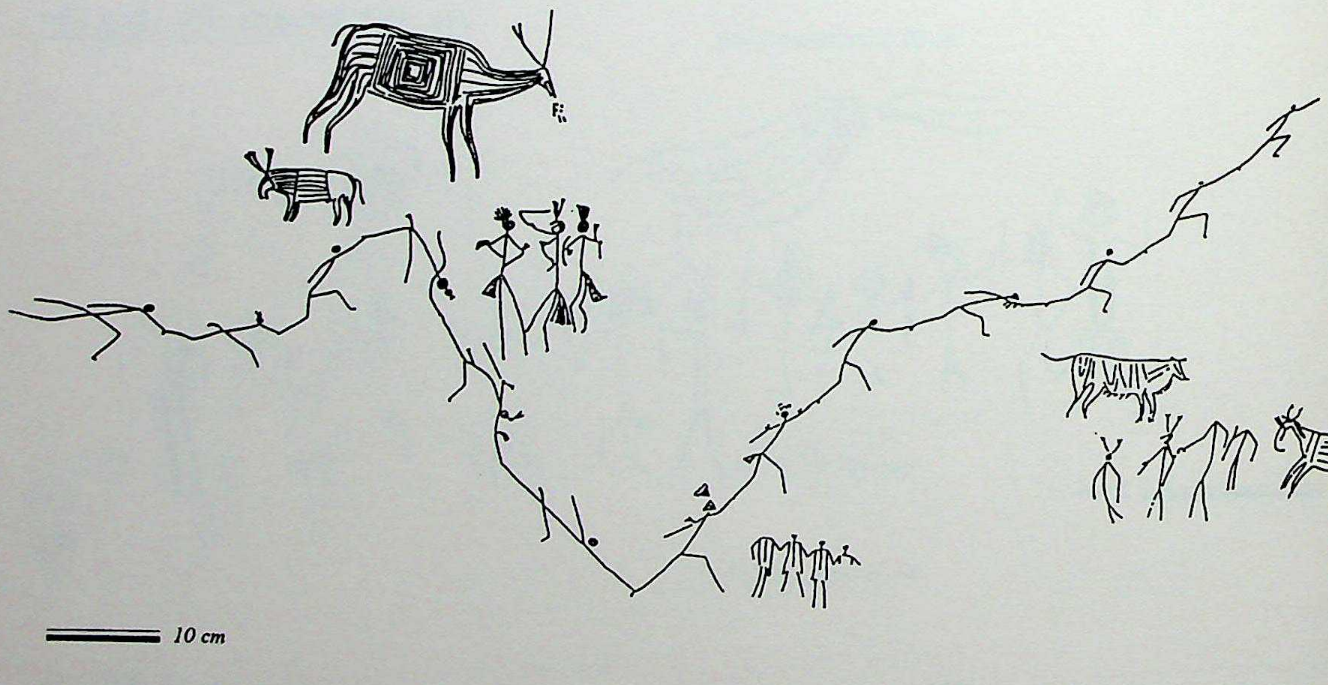
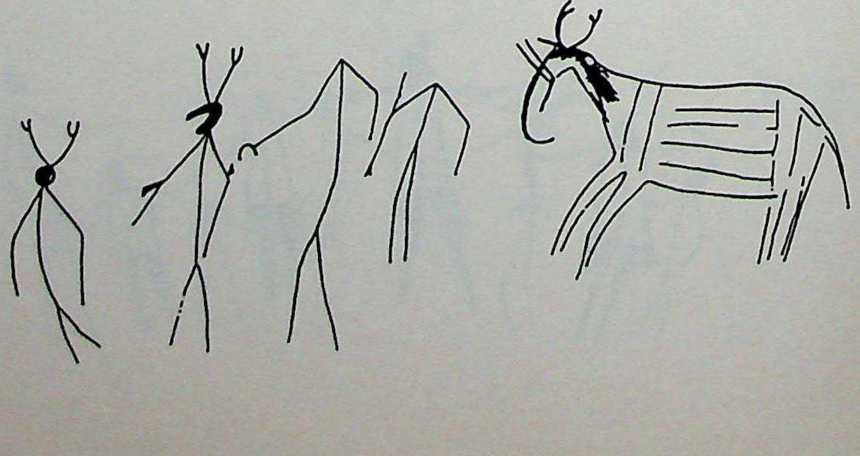


*Fig.:**195**(from Fig.:194): Urden*



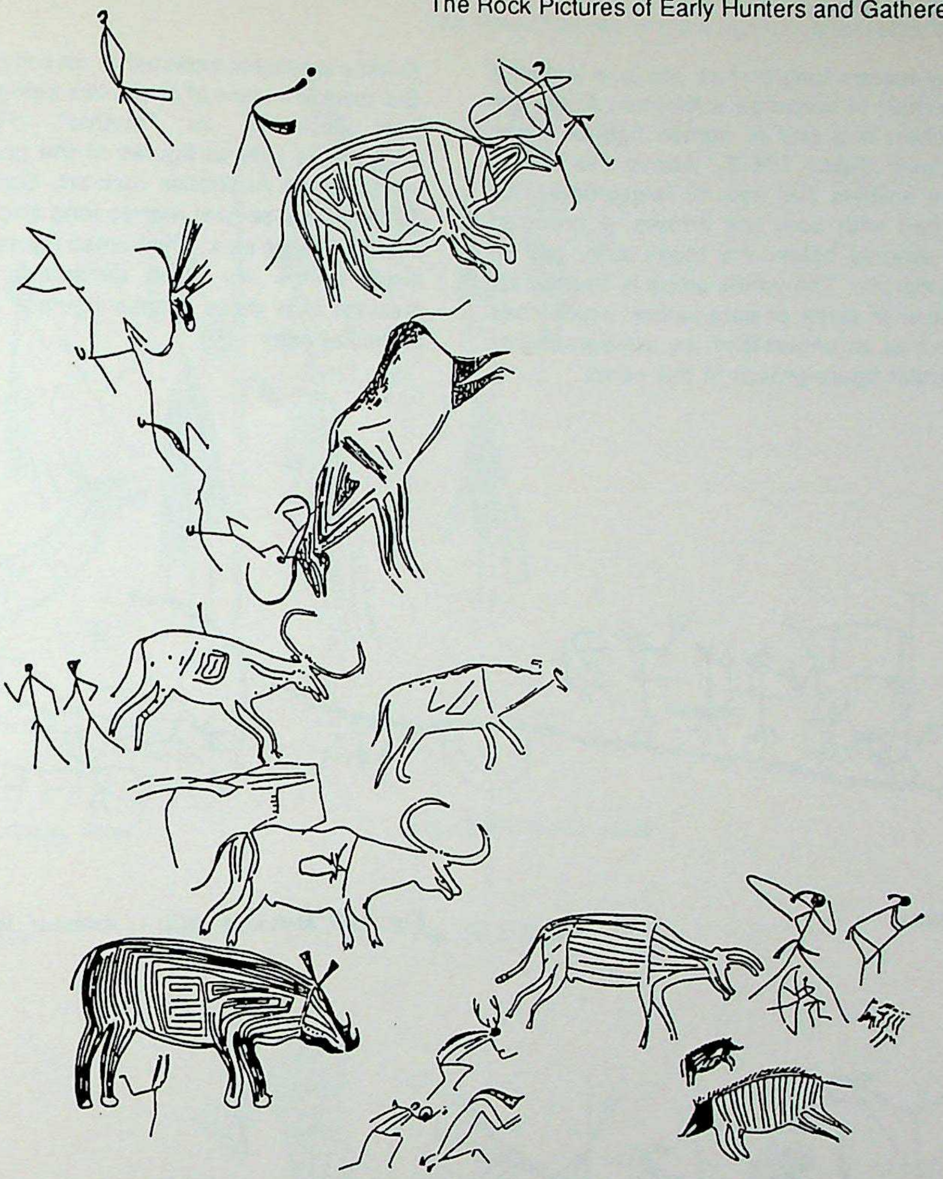
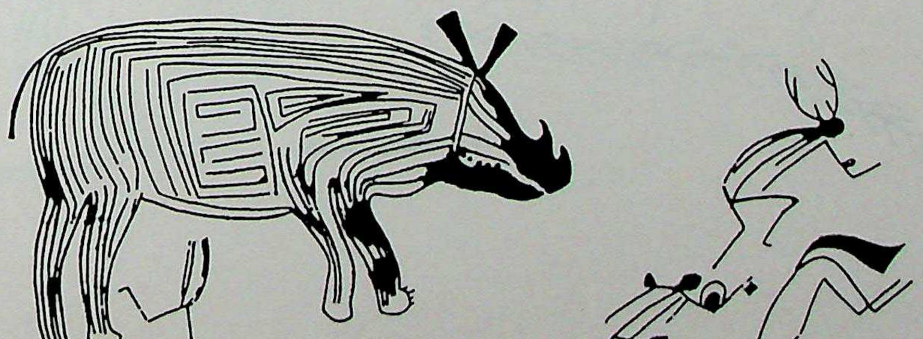


Fig.: ***196****: Urden*

Fig.: ***197****(from Fig.:196): Urden*



A several meters long picture group in Astachal shows a chain of horizontal stick-men. At the end of this chain is a pair of human figures drawn upside down (Figs.: 198-9). Above this human chain are animals and several larger figures of man, armed with bow and arrows. A group of deers is directly below the topsy-turvy pair of anthropomorphs. The whole group is covered by a thick layer of sinter or dust-patina, which does not permit us to understand the stratigraphy of the particular figure-groups in this panel.

Snakes are rarely depicted in mesolithic rock-art. But there is a class of snake-like beings which are best described as "mythic" (Figs.:200-1), comparable only to figures of the great rainbow snake of the Australian rock-art. Some of these "snakes" are several metres long and often have antlers or large ears. The human figures related to these beings are often diminutive, so that I presume that these "snake figures" represent a particular deity.

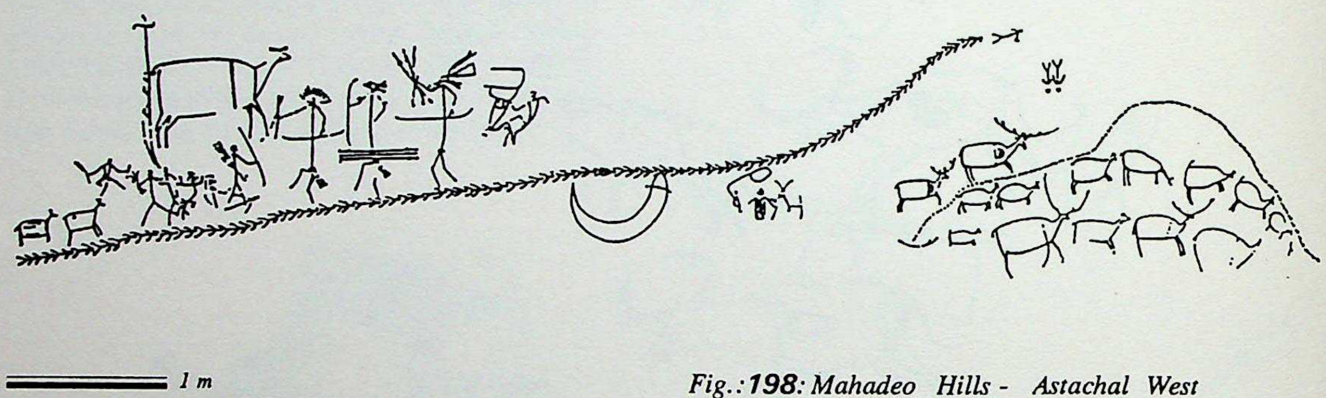


Fig.: ***198:*** *Mahadeo Hills - Astachal West*

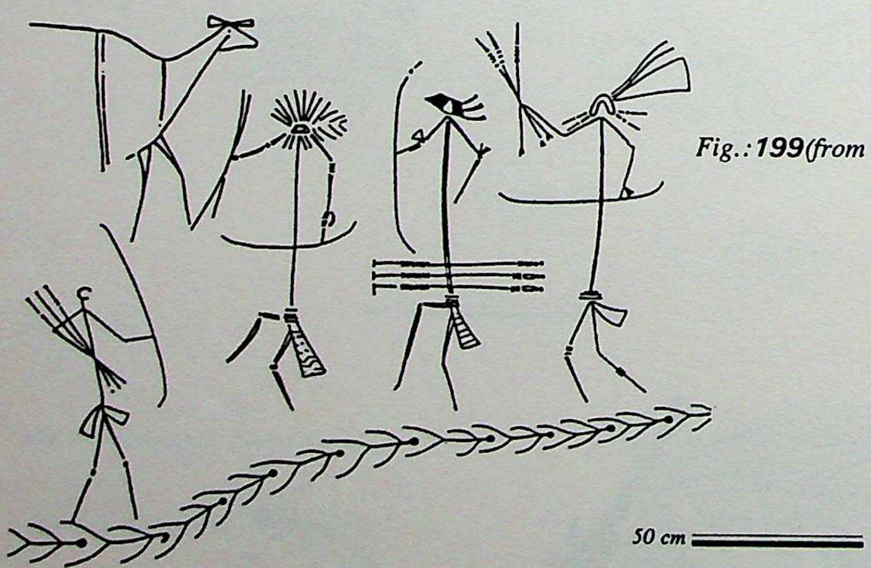


Fig.: ***199*** *(from Fig.:189): Mahadeo Hills - Astachal West*

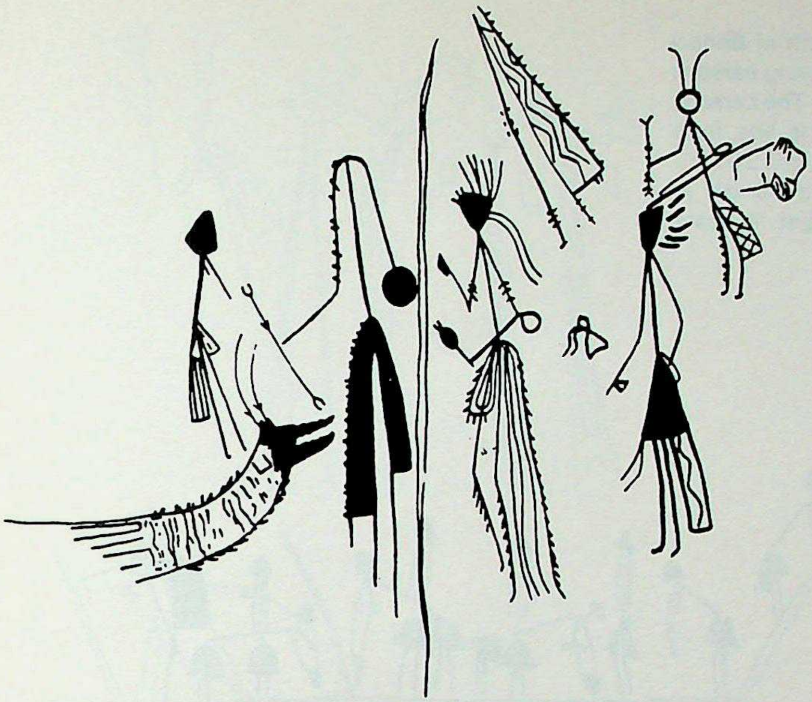
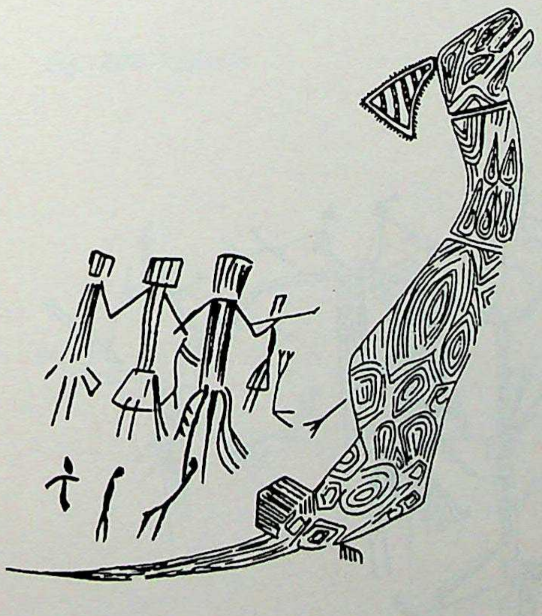


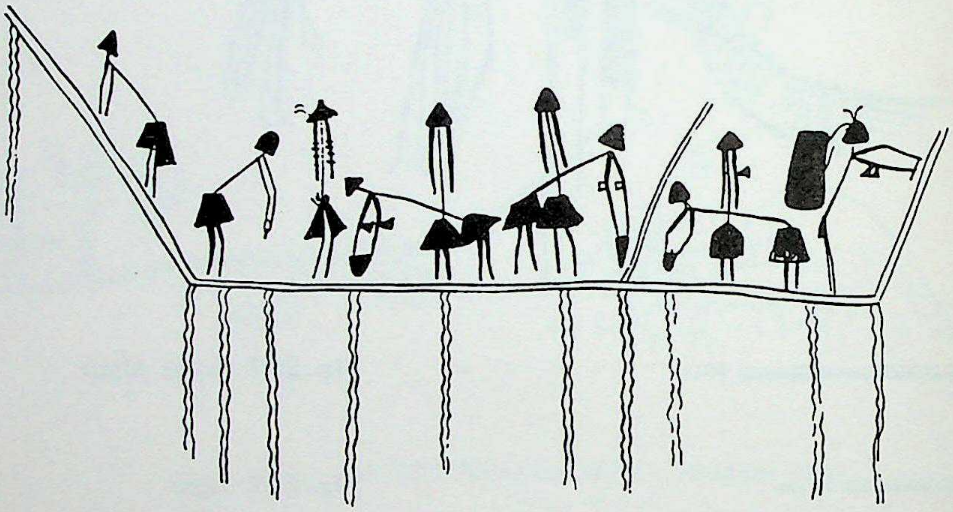
*Fig.:***200***: Gupha Masir*

*Fig.:***201***: Sagar*



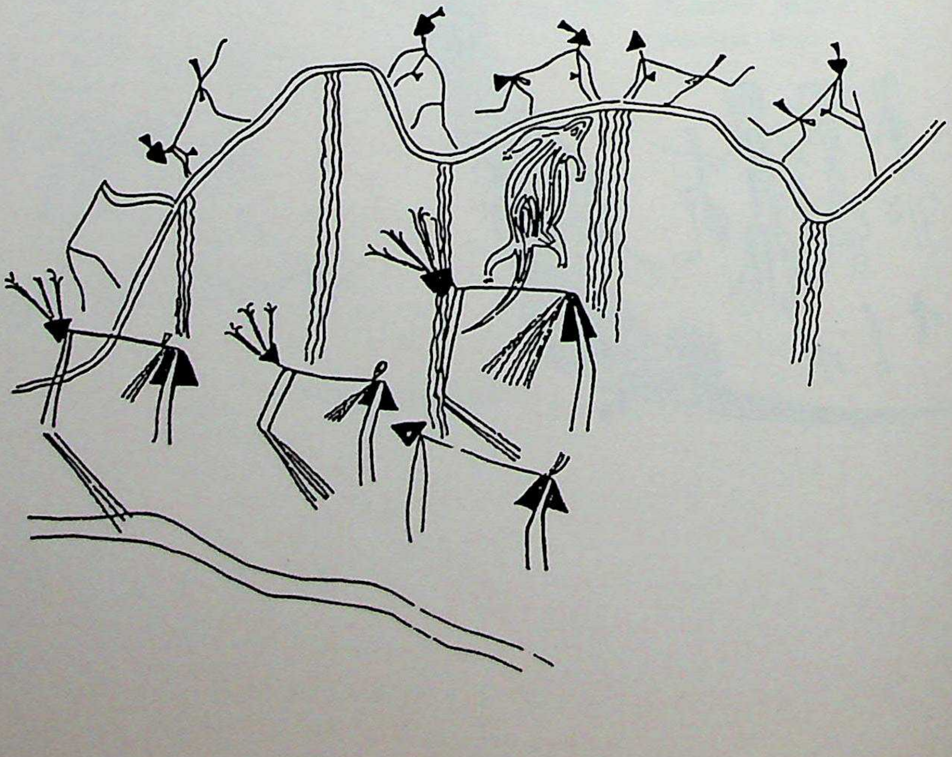
In the mesolithic rock paintings south of Bhopal there are several picture groups showing persons engaged in an unidentifiable activity. The persons are generally placed above a double line from which vertical wavy lines originate (Figs.: 202-5). Since all these groups show aquatic animals in their vicinity, the wavy lines might indicate water.

*Fig.:***202***: Kathotia*

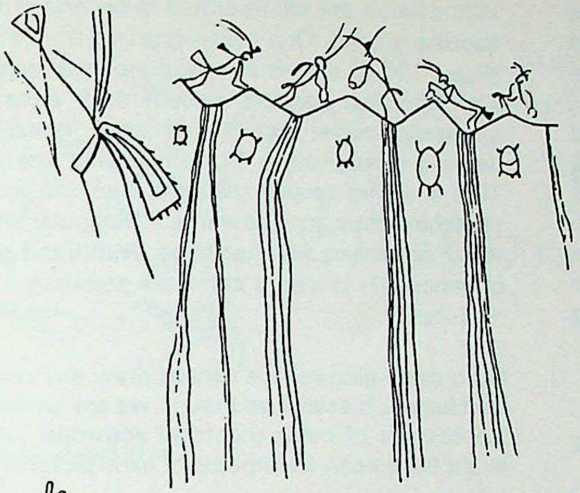


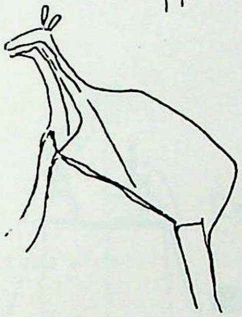
10 cm

*Fig.:***203***: Kathotia*



10 cm



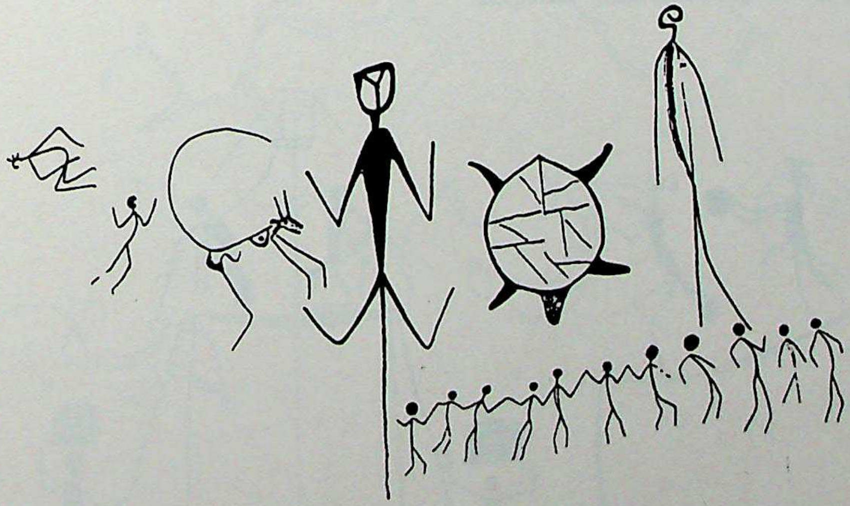


10 cm

*Fig.:***205***: Satkunda*

*Fig.:***204***: Kathotia*

10 cm



Dancing is one of those picture themes which is particularly obvious and also very common in mesolithic rock-art. Already some of the very earliest paintings (Figs.: 33,38,39, 206-9) show long rows of dancers, detailed enough to understand different steps and to some extent even the choreography of these dances. Particularly interesting is one scene from Lakhajoar (Figs.: 206-7), which shows dancers on a artificial platform adjacent to a still higher scaffolding onto which two persons are carrying loads.

Wild animals are incorporated in several of these dancing groups. One painting group from Firengi (Figs.: 108-9) shows several couples of dancers. The individual dancers stretch both arms, but strangely, never touch. Another remarkable dancing group comes from the same site (Fig.: 191) showing several men and also one woman stretching their arms towards a triangular shape, which resembles a human head. Within this group of dancers(?) is also a carnivore standing on his hind legs.

From these pictures we cannot draw any rational conclusion. It seems as though we are looking at the cosmos of cultic-theatrical activities, which might have been an impetus of early pictorial art.

*Fig.:**206**: Lakhajoar*

10 cm

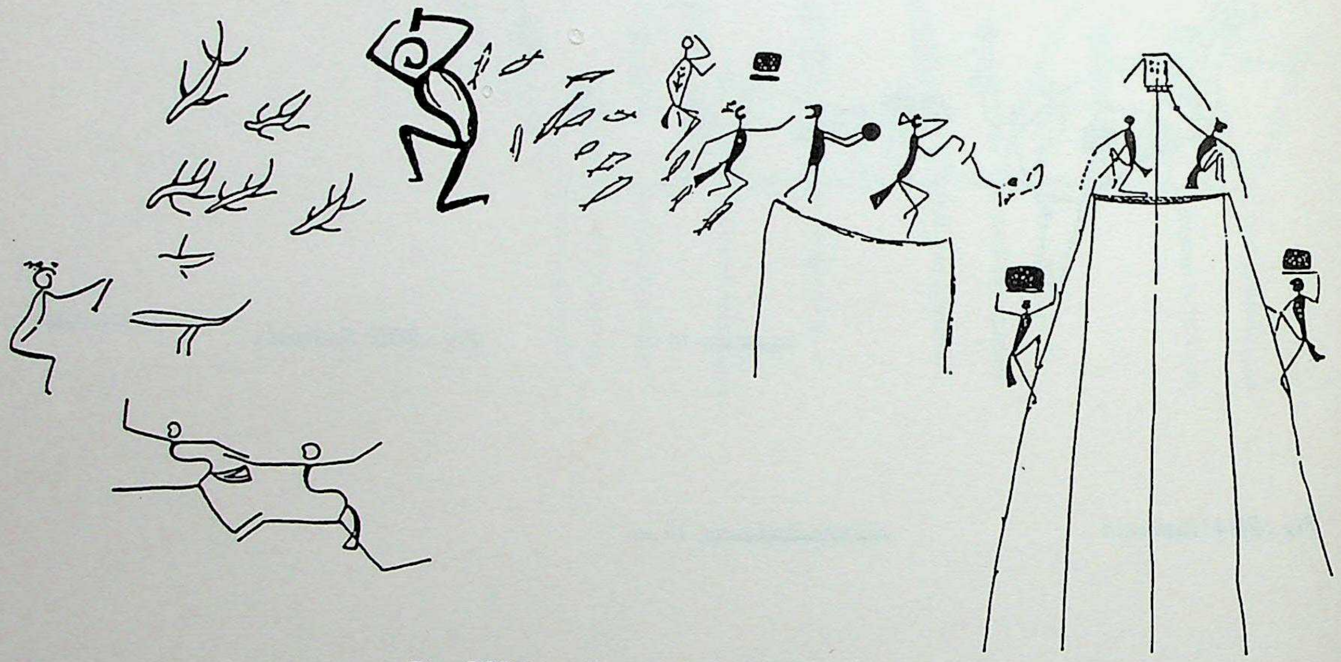
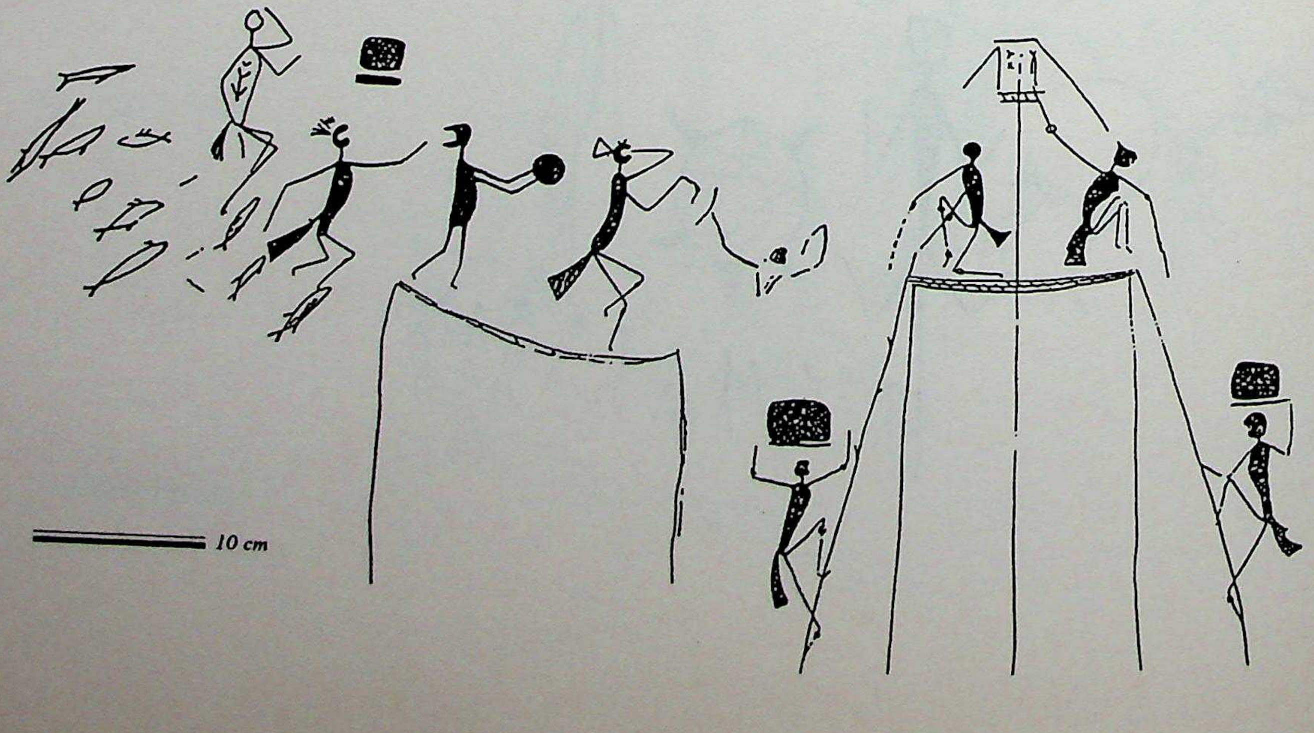


*Fig.:**207**(from Fig.:206): Lakhajoar*



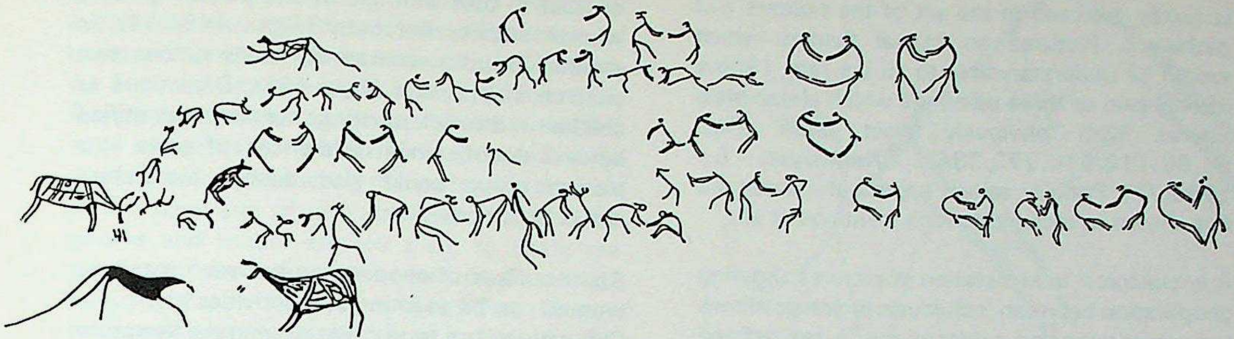


*Fig.:***208***: Firengi*

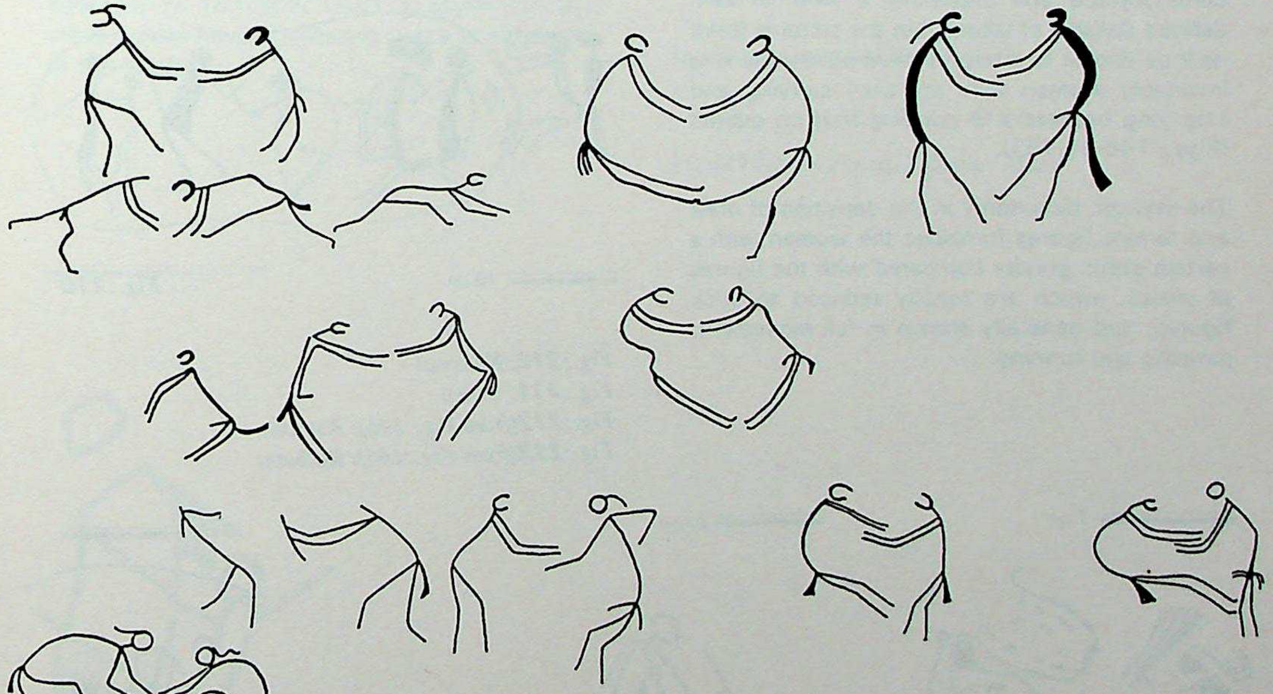


*Fig.:***209***(from Fig.:208): Firengi*

Sexual intercourse between a man and a woman is rarely depicted in the art of the hunters and gatherers. Pictures on sexual themes which would be understandable to us are rare; I know of only two or three paintings which show male figures with obviously erect phalli (Fig.: 64,99,118,210,272,334), (Neumayer, E., 1983:71). Primary sexual organs of women are not shown in mesolithic rock paintings at all.

A sociological interpretation of pictures showing cooperation between individuals or groups allows too many opposing explanations. A sex-defined division of labour is obvious. Cooperations of women and men hardly ever appear, or, if they do, are not discernible to us. The few instances where man and woman are depicted together do not convey any rational narratives. The only picture where we see a man a woman and a child in a house eating together (Fig.: 152), may indicate the nucleus family as a cooperation unit; the scarcity of such evidences, however, rather speaks against it.

If hunting was the domain of the male, collecting and processing of eatables was the domain of women. This demarcation is almost too commonplace and cliche-like a view of sex-defined division of labour, but the pictures leave us little choice to interpret them otherwise. It is invariably women who are seen carrying and emptying baskets and grinding fruit on querns (Figs.: 146-51,153).

The stylistic dichotomy in the depiction of male and female figures furnishes the woman with a certain static gravity compared with the figures of males, which are mostly reduced to stick figures, and generally shown in full movement, jumping and running.

Small children are only recognizable in close contact to their mothers.In one picture group a woman suckles her baby (Figs.: 146,214), in another group a woman obviously carries two children in a basket (Fig.: 138). Depictions of children in the rock paintings cannot be identified beyond doubt, since differences of sizes in a picture group could also denote hierarchies rather than body-sizes.

Another class of cooperation between man and woman can be seen in "cult activities".
Cult activity is a term often used in the literature on prehistoric art to describe scenes which we are not able to interpret rationally. Still, within the large body of mesolithic rock-art exists a large number of paintings, in which figures of men, women, animals, as well as implements are comparable to the recognized system of stylistic conventions --understandable in themselves but not in their relation towards each other.

The whole area of "cult" and "religion" is difficult to interpret. Demarcations between the rational and the irrational can only be drawn very subjectively by the individual researcher.

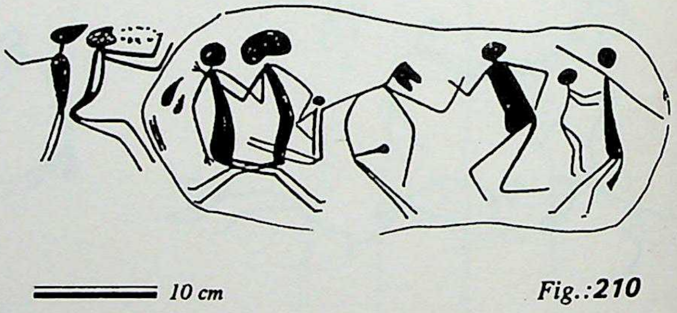


*Fig.:**210***

*Fig.:**210**: Kharwai*
*Fig.:**211**: Urden*
*Fig.:**212**(from Fig.:146): Kathotia*
*Fig.:**213**(from Fig.:146): Kathotia*

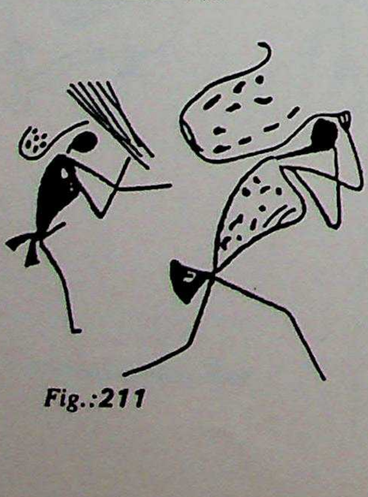


*Fig.:**211***

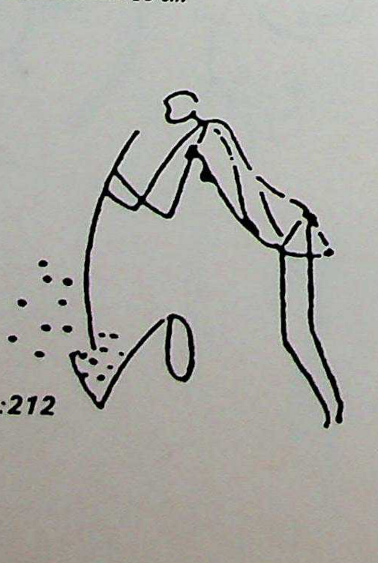


*Fig.:**212***

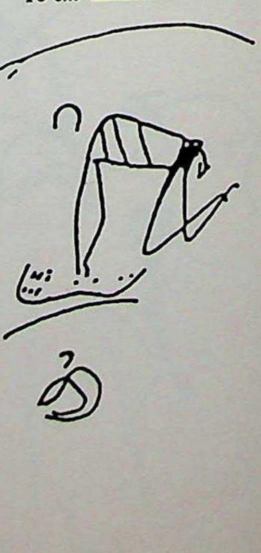


*Fig.:**213***

Weapons and implements are shown in the rock paintings almost exclusively in scenes relating to a particular activity. Much of the information on bows and arrows, spears and other implements we have is from depictions of hunting scenes. Spears and arrows are generally shown barbed with microliths, which is indicated by obliquely placed short dashes along the shafts. On account of the small size of rock paintings, most of the arrows and spears are too short to show the details of the microliths used or the exact construction of notches and fletchings. Only in rare cases are weapons drawn in finer details, even showing different types of arrows and spearheads.

The arrows are generally pointed, but there are several drawings of arrows showing a trapezoid or triangular point, indicating the use of a tranchet or broad-edged microlith at the tip. Since several detailed depictions of hunters show more than one type of arrows in their lots (Figs.: 217,224), I conclude that different game were bagged by different types of arrows. Broad-edged arrows shown in the paintings might indicate the use of transverse-edged microliths or wooden cones as arrow-tips as they are still in use for bird hunting (Figs.: 217-8). Some arrows and spears show microlithic barbs set asymmetrically, while others have alternating barbs at either side of the shafts.

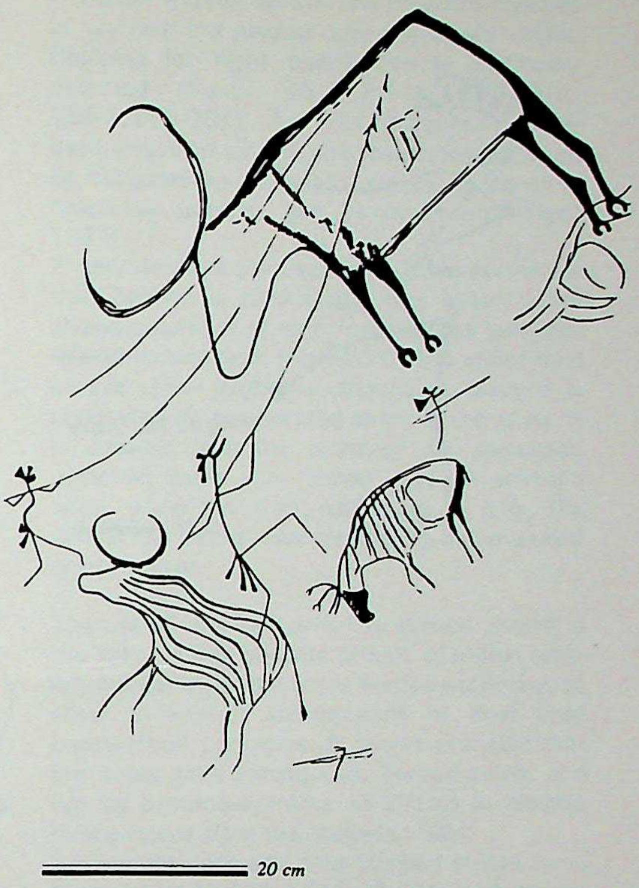


*Fig.:**215**(from Fig.:81): Gupha Masir*

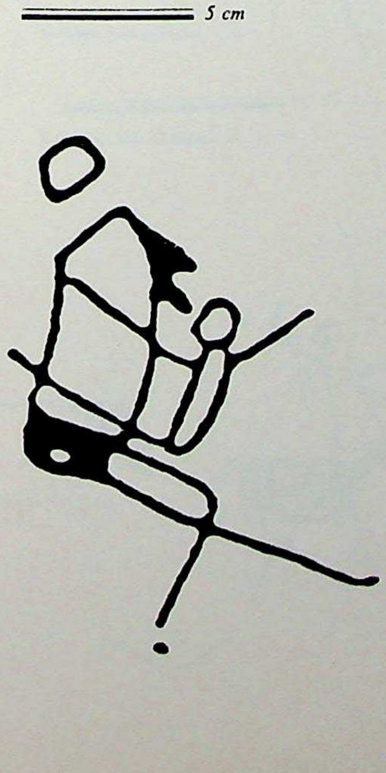


*Fig.:**214**(from Fig.:146): Kathotia*

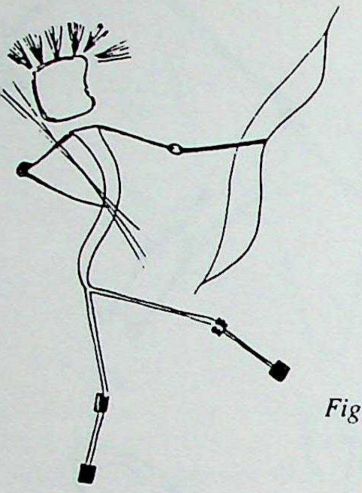


*Fig.:**216**: Urden*

10 cm

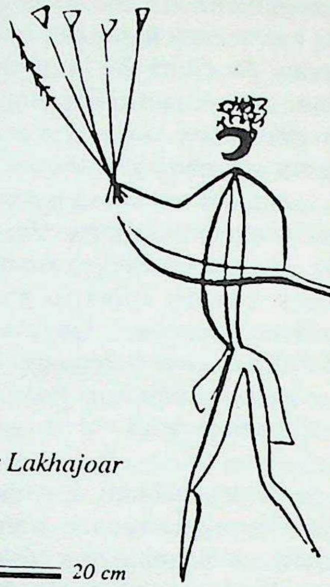


*Fig.:**217**: Lakhajoar*

20 cm

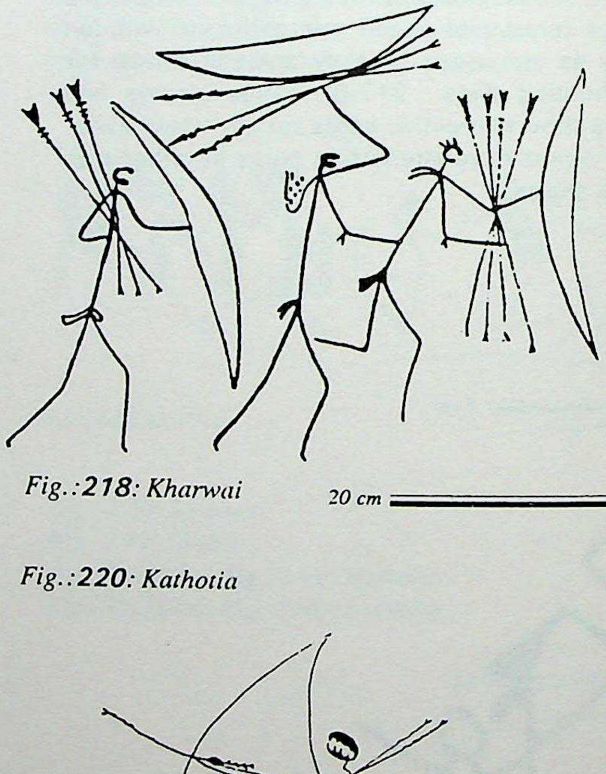


*Fig.:**218**: Kharwai*

20 cm

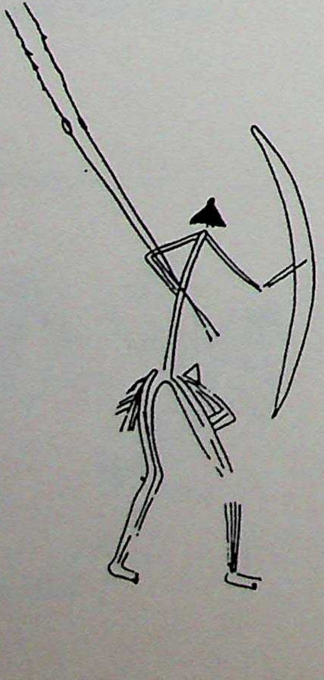


*Fig.:**219**: Firengi*

10 cm

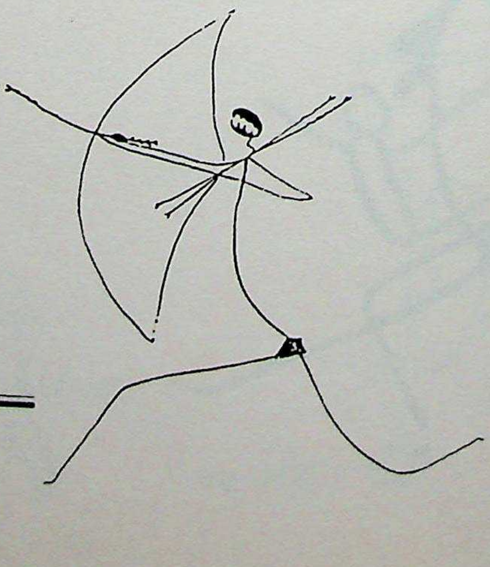
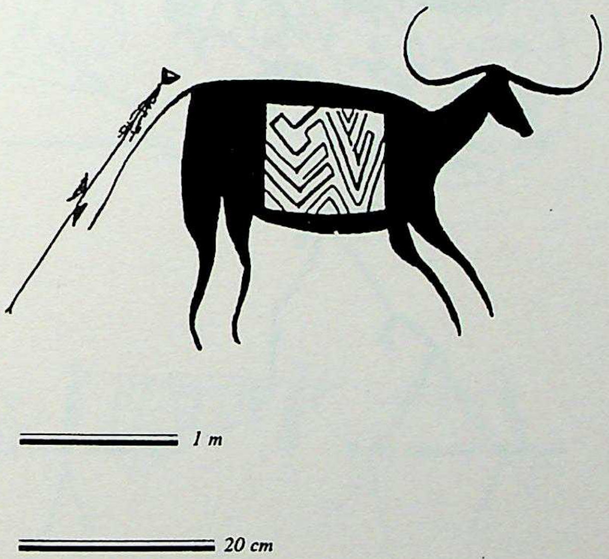


*Fig.:**220**: Kathotia*

Microlith-set tools were found from mesolithic levels in Mehrgarh in Pakistan. The microliths were set into bitumen which fortunately has conserved the implements (Lechvallier,M., 1987:81-2, Fig 60). No such finds have yet been recorded from subcontinental India. The reason is most probably the soil condition in tropical regions, which does not facilitate the survival of organic material into which these microlithic tool elements have been fastened.

An exceptionally detailed drawing of an arrow from Lakhajoar shows two semicircular microliths set alternately into the sides of the upper third of the shaft. The missile's top is set with a transverse microlith, forming a broad cutting edge (Figs.: 221-2).

*Fig.:**221**: Lakhajoar*



The shaft-ends of arrows are generally notched to facilitate the placing onto the bow's sinew. Fletching for flight stabilization is commonly depicted (Figs.: 45,117,144,181,186-8, 198-9,216-20). Several pictures show decorations on arrows and spears, which might be explained as ownership-marks, as no other functional purpose can be made out (Figs.: 198-9).

A very detailed painting from Urden portrays a man holding a particularly long spear which shows a number of technical features generally related to harpoons (Fig.: 233). The upper third of this spear might be detachable, since it is connected by a decorated string to the shaft. It is possible that the point of the spearhead detached itself after impact into an animal's body, while the shaft still hung to it by the connecting string, thus hampering the wounded animals flight.

The use of bow and arrow is already shown in the very earliest stylistic groups of Indian rock-art, but generally the bows are too schematic to allow a detailed identification of their finer construction principles. It seems probable that the bows were strung with fibrous cords, and not by bamboo-splinters as shown in historic rock pictures from the Mahadeo Hills.

Arrows are generally held bundled in one hand (Figs.:144,179,198-9,216-20,224) or fastened to the middle (by a belt?) (Figs.:138,157,180, 182,186). No quiver is ever shown in mesolithic rock pictures.

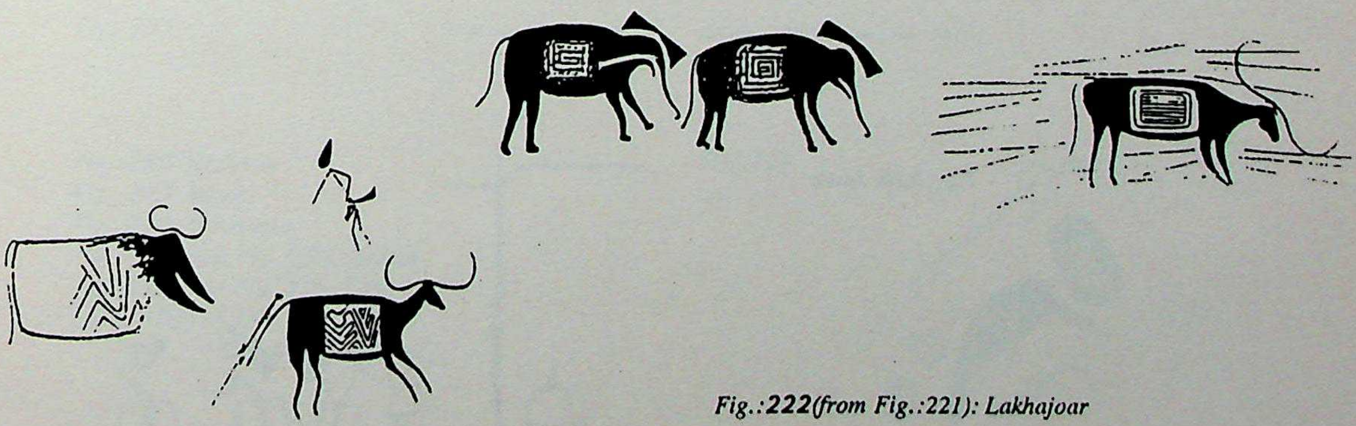


*Fig.:**222**(from Fig.:221): Lakhajoar*

The hunters carried nets or pouches made of netting strung to their waist (Fig.: 138), which when loaded were carried at the back extending from a headband (Fig.: 224), very much like porters in the north-eastern parts of India still do. Besides the large baskets and carrying nets the hunters also had small pouches which were hung over the shoulder (Fig.: 218), (Neumayer,E., 1983:49f).

Load-bearing men are not commonly depicted in the rock pictures. Much more common are women carrying baskets on their back. In the large foraging scenes women carry baskets of different shapes. They are seen transporting loads like fruit (Figs.: 146-8,151,211-2), rats (Fig.: 227) and in one case a woman is even shown carrying two children in a flat-bottomed basket (Fig.: 138).

In the mesolithic pictures of the Central Vindhya Region loads are always carried in baskets or pouches, extended from a headband, at the back of the carrier.

In the pictures of the hunters and gatherers of the Northern Vindhya Region, particularly at the sites in the Mirzapur District the loads are shown transported by the help of porterage yokes or extended from stakes which are carried over the shoulder of two persons in a file (Figs.: 230,256).

The carrying of loads by the help of porterage yokes was otherwise the usual load transportation technique during the chalcolithic and historic periods only (Figs.: 231,392,399,428-30).

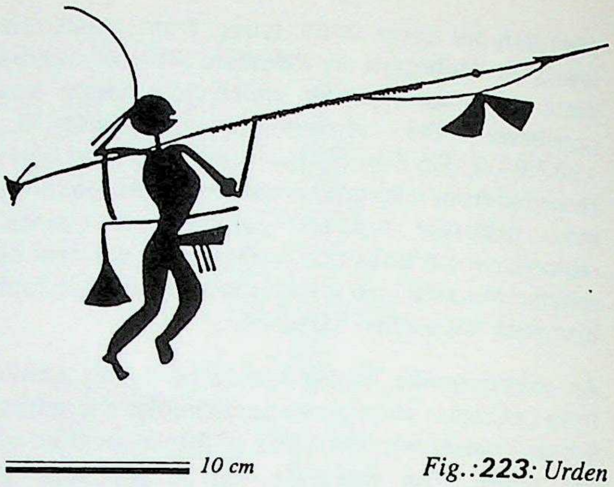


*Fig.:**223**: Urden*

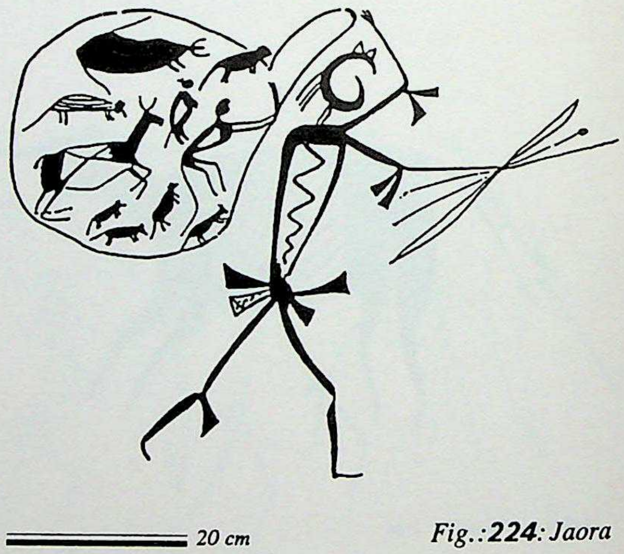
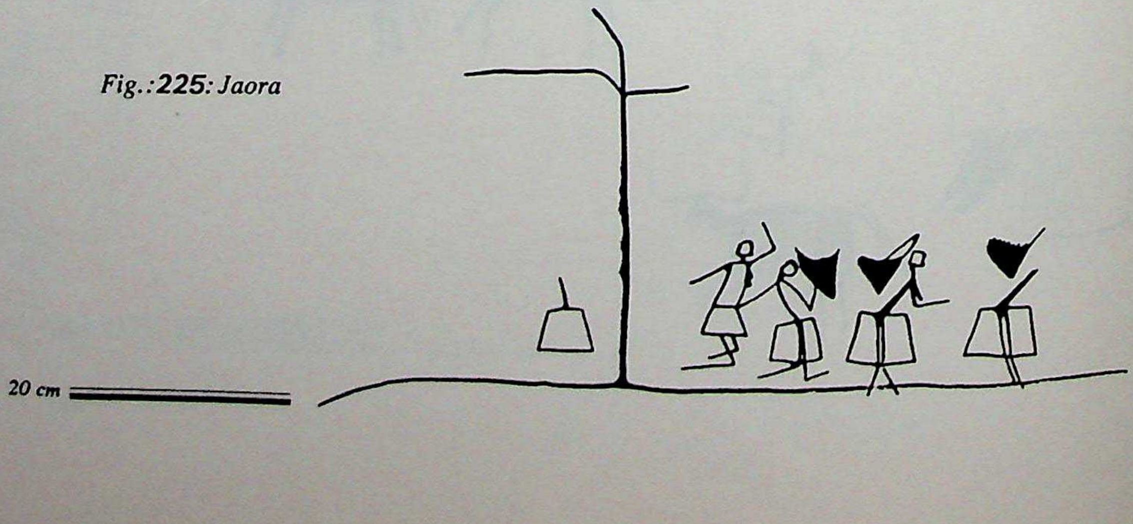


*Fig.:**224**: Jaora*

*Fig.:**225**: Jaora*



The inventory of the foraging peoples also included containers for liquids, but these are shown --or recognized-- rarely. Within the "dining-scene" mentioned earlier (Fig.: 152), two oval containers, linked together by a rope are to be seen within reach of the persons eating. A further depiction of a container from which a man is drinking exists in Bhimbetka (Fig.: 228). Further South, in Badami exists a painting of a person sitting in a hut, with two containers placed close by (Figs.: 226,269).

A further important implement, which was found in large numbers during excavations at mesolithic sites, are the barrel-shaped stone-grinders, which were used over stone slabs and functioned as querns. The use of grinding stones is shown in a few paintings from Kathotia (Figs.: 146-51). The pictures clearly show kneeling women working at these querns, obviously processing fruit which other women are seen unloading.

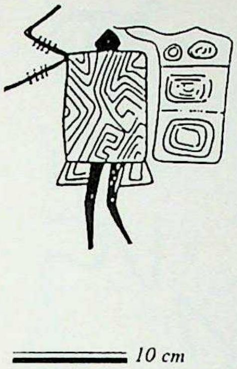


*Fig.:**226***

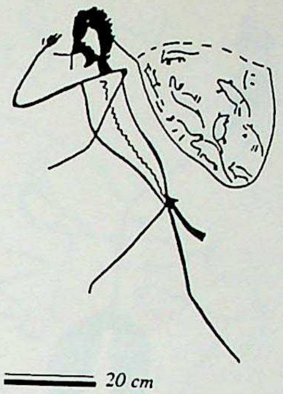


*Fig.:**227***

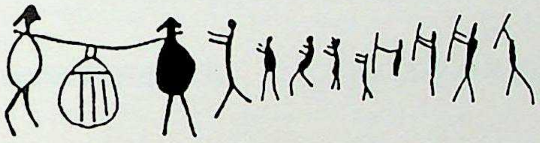
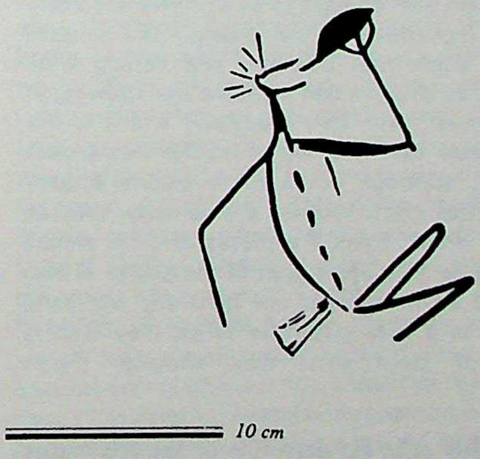


*Fig.:**230***

*Fig.:**228***



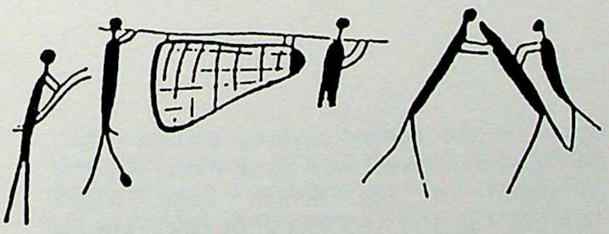
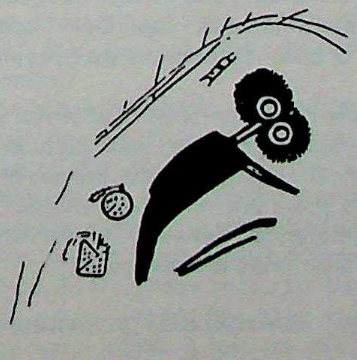


*Fig.:**231***

*Fig.:**226**: Kathotia*
*Fig.:**227**: Jaora*
*Fig.:**228**: Bhimbetka*
*Fig.:**229**(from Fig.:269): Badami*
*Fig.:**230**(from Fig.:256): Kerwaghat*
*Fig.:**231**(from Fig.:399): Firengi*

*Fig.:**229***



Conspicuously missing in rock pictures are depictions of hammers or axes, which are virtually absent as well from the mesolithic material as far as known from excavations.
In the Southern Deccan, at a site near Badami, a solitary and unique picture shows a man holding a hoe or a pick-axe-like implement, which might have been fashioned from an antler piece (Fig.: 232,319).

All other artifacts shown in the mesolithic paintings are personal adornments and clothes, which show a considerable variety and complexity. Even the very earliest pictures show a considerable sophistication in dresses and adornments. Some of these seem overexaggerated and hardly represent "every-day" wear. They might have been festivity-adornments or indicated a certain hierarchical status of the wearer. The pictures of course do not disclose of which material these adornments were made.

Of considerable interest are depictions of long strips of wavy cloth, commonly worn by men. The male attire consisted of a long waistcloth, which was left to fall in a train, and seemed to have been soft enough to sway freely according to the movement of the wearer. The pictures clearly show that basketry and netting were known, so that we can presume that drawing of fibres must have ben practised, and it is not improbable that weaving of textiles was known as well, although not a single picture actually shows this craft. Women are generally dressed with in short, frock-like pieces of cloth around the middle. The upper part of the bodies in men as well as in women are generally left bare, except in a few instances when they wear a piece of cloth over their shoulder (Figs.: 55,271).

The highly abstract depiction of humans makes it difficult to recognize the finer details of clothes or adornments. And since the square bodies of women are often filled in with intricate designs, any differentiations between adornments, dresses or body-decorations are quite impossible.

Within the long time-span over which stone age food-gatherers produced rock pictures, we see no significant changes in the themes of rock-art. Although there are no abrupt stylistic changes, subtle differences between the earliest pictures and the later ones are obvious.

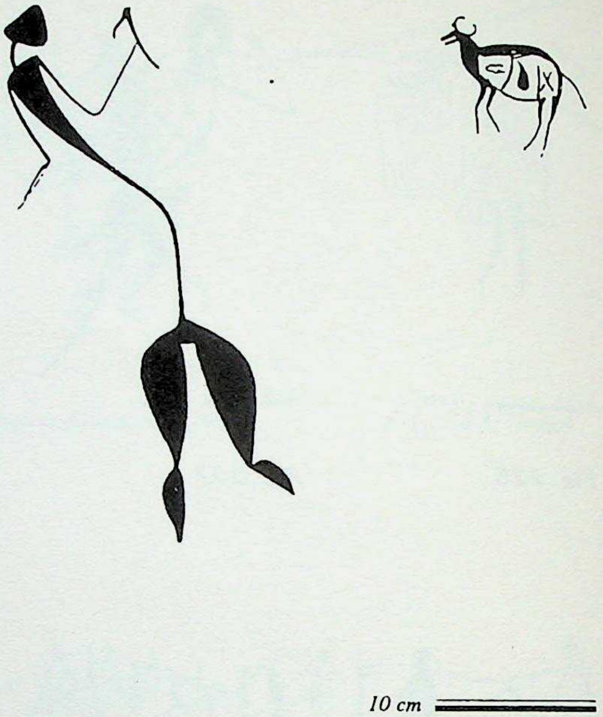


*Fig.:**232:** Badami- Timupa Gudda*

The strict minimalization in depicting human figures in the earliest stylistic groups (Figs.: 38-50,54-64) gives way to a more physical perception of the human body (Figs.: 107,123,135,137,153,223,230). Not in a single mesolithic painting was a more naturalistic image of men ever attempted, contrary to the depiction of animals, which --although caught in stylistic reductions and formalism as well-- are portrayed much more bodily and convey a more realistic image.

The heads of the humans are shown as triangular, square, or round, without any attempt to draw eyes noses or ears. In some of the earliest depictions of human figures heads are shown as round shapes with a depression, indicating the mouth. In a few picture groups small round circles are drawn in front of the mouth, obviously indicating chanting or singing (Figs.: 38,59,233).

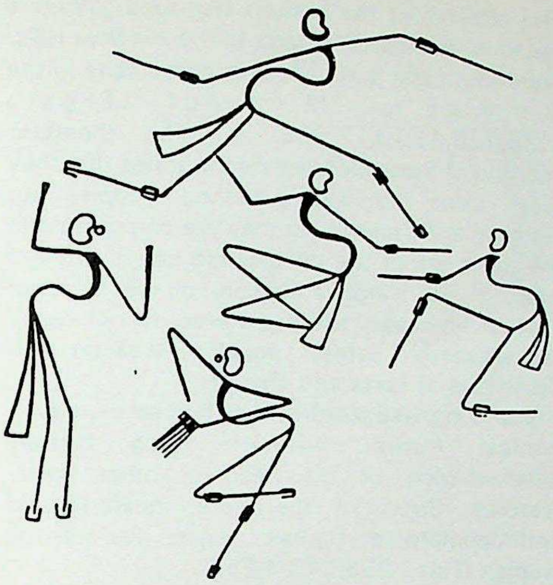


Fig.: ***233****: Lakhajoar*

The representation of animals does not undergo many stylistic changes in the art of the hunters and gatherers. In the later stylistic groups there seems to be a tendency towards more conventional stereotypes of the depicted animals. But in no case are the animals drawn as repetitively as in the later pictures of the agriculturists and cattle-breeders.

The mesolithic animal figures were always defined by a single contour line, which included all nuances of movement. Contrary to the chalcolithic animal figures, which were "assembled" from a rectangular shape which invariably formed the body, while legs, tail, neck and head, and in the case of cattle a hump, were attached to it. In this way all the animal figures have an air of repetitiveness and are to be differentiated only by specific features like antlers, tusks and horns (Figs.: 2,361,363,376).

While in mesolithic pictures the animals' movements are shown individually adapted to the particular theme of the pictures, like standing, jumping, browsing, looking backwards or stumbling after the impact of an arrow, the chalcolithic animal figures are arrayed like a herd of cattle walking in rows and files. The mesolithic animals are wild animals in every respect; the chalcolithic are always domesticated.

The mesolithic artists used space quite freely and extended their compositions in every direction (Figs.: 81,105,127,137-8,146,153,176-7, 179-82,194,196), although a general horizontal pictorial organization can be observed.
During the chalcolithic the pictorial composition follows invariably a well defined, straight, horizontal line (Figs.: 373-407).
Natural strains in the rocks and irregularities in the rock structure, like inclusions of stones or cracks in the rock surface, were readily taken up by mesolithic artists as stimulus for figures. A crack in the rock could be transformed into the back-line of an animal, defining its size and shape.

Most of the individual figures of mesolithic pictures are no more than 30 cm high. Still, there are a number of figures far surpassing this size. Some of the portrayed animals are life-size or more. Many of these large figures are in a fragmentary state of preservation, and it is not easy to understand the connection between these large figures and the multitude of smaller figures in the vicinity. Still, some of the large deified animals, which are known from the Central Vindhya Region, indicate that they were the centre of some cult(?) activity.
Paintings of animals larger than life are also known from South Indian rock-art sites. In the Benakal Forest exists a zoomorph figure of more than 11 m length; several anthropomorph figures in the same region are also depicted larger than life (Figs.: 278-9,336,340-1).

As already mentioned, there is no pronounced stylistic or thematic change within the long period of the art of the hunters and food-gatherers.
The themes of the mesolithic rock paintings from the Central Vindhya Region are more or less identical with the paintings in the Chambal Valley, although the rather plump forms of the figures there would lead the superficial viewer to think he was seeing an altogether different style (Figs.: 42,84,234). These pictures were done originally in white, which has been weathered away since long. What is left are the contour

lines in red. A similar effect is visible on the pictures at the site Gupha Masir, where besides red as the colour of the contour lines, green was used as the in-filling colour (Figs.: 42,84,235). Some exceptionally well-preserved mesolithic polychrome picture groups are seen near Bori in the Mahadeo Hills, which still give a good idea of what these multicoloured paintings might have looked like at other sites as well. Indeed, some of the best preserved polychrome paintings of mesolithic art in India are known from Bori (Figs.: 70,75,184,192).

The pictures of the hunters and food-gatherers found in the northern parts of the Vindhya Hills, are stylistically quit different, particularly in the district of Mirzapur (Figs.: 1,98,123,126,172,236-57). The thematic analysis of these pictures clearly states that they were done by food-gathering people, but formally and stylistically they are comparable to the paintings of the chalcolithic period in other parts of the Vindhya Region. In the Mirzapur District however, these pictures do not figure domesticated cattle, metallic weapons or depictions of carts and chariots.

Humans in these pictures are often no more than conical forms, without much further differentiation of the head or other bodily features. Some of the more square-shaped anthropomorphic figures might also depict women (Figs.: 238,243-4,256).

The activities of people in these paintings remain very symbolic. "Hunting-scenes" consist mostly of a centrally placed animal standing stiff and motionless, receiving the deadly spear in its chest or hindquarters by a similarly stiffly depicted anthropomorph (Figs.: 236-45).

The human figures here are always considerably smaller than the animals (Figs.: 236-44,256). The theatric organization of these paintings compares well with the chalcolithic paintings further west in the Vindhya Hills.

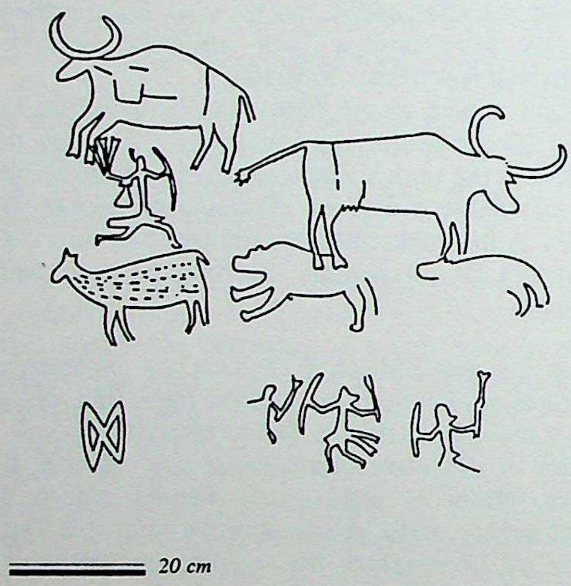


*Fig.:**234**: Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla*

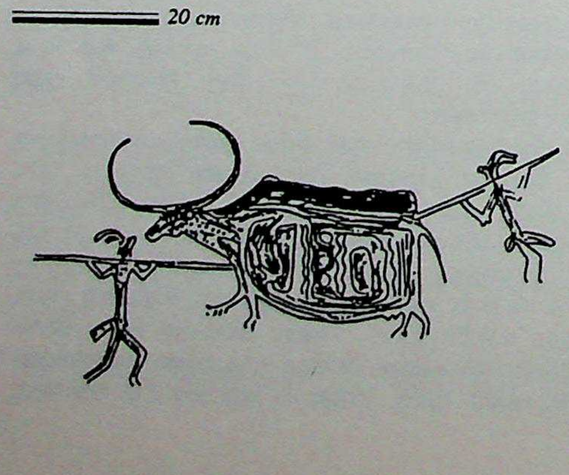


*Fig.:**235**: Gupha Masir*

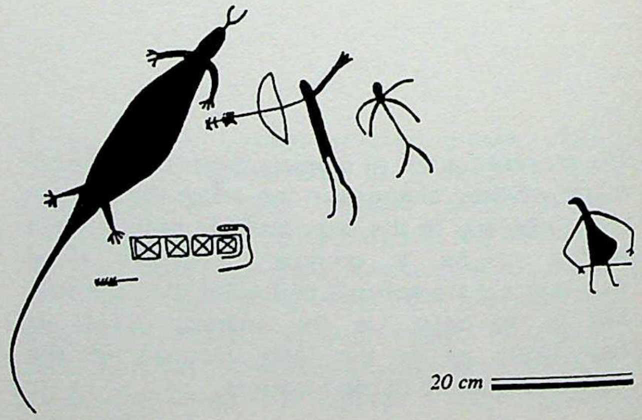


*Fig.:**236**: Kerwaghat*

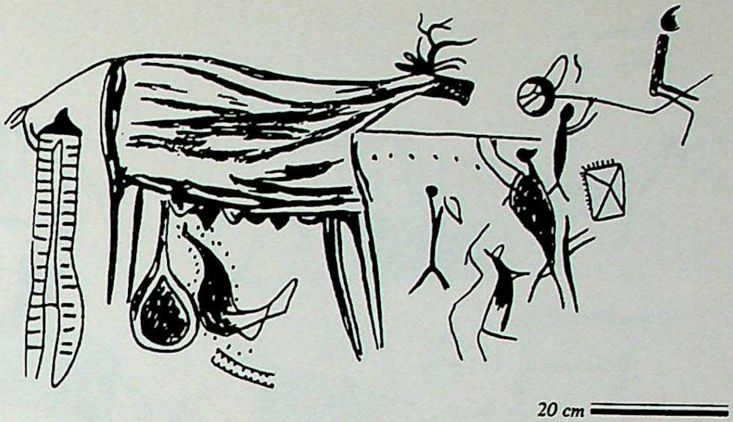


Fig.: ***237****(from Fig.:1): Baldharia*

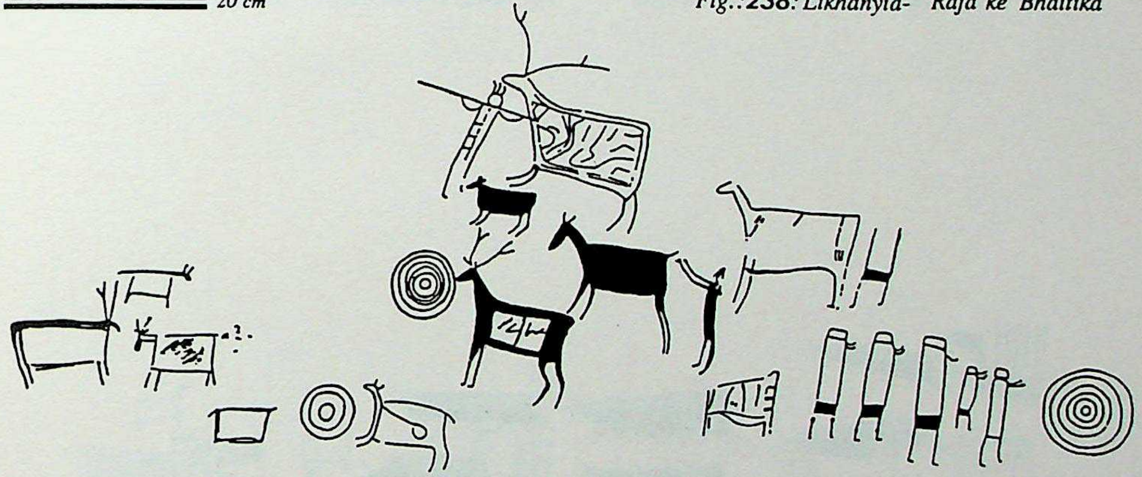


Fig.: ***238****: Likhanyia- Raja ke Bhaitika*

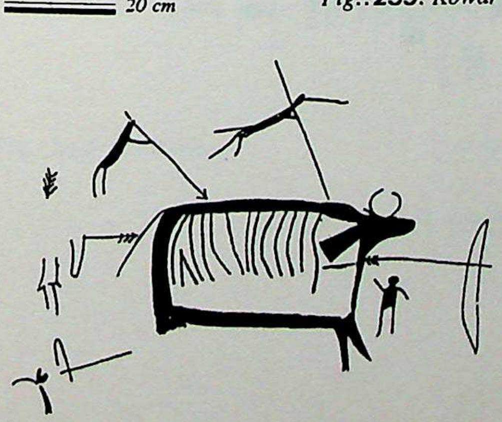


Fig.: ***239****: Kowar Khoh*

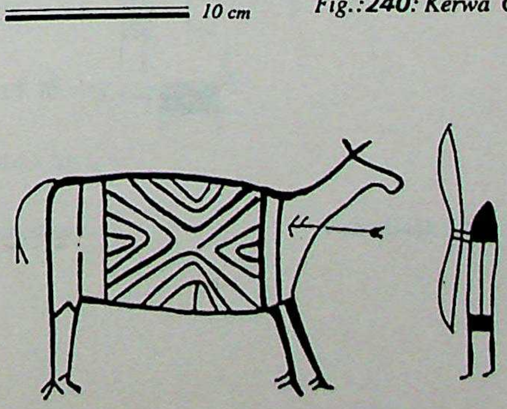


Fig.: ***240****: Kerwa Ghat*

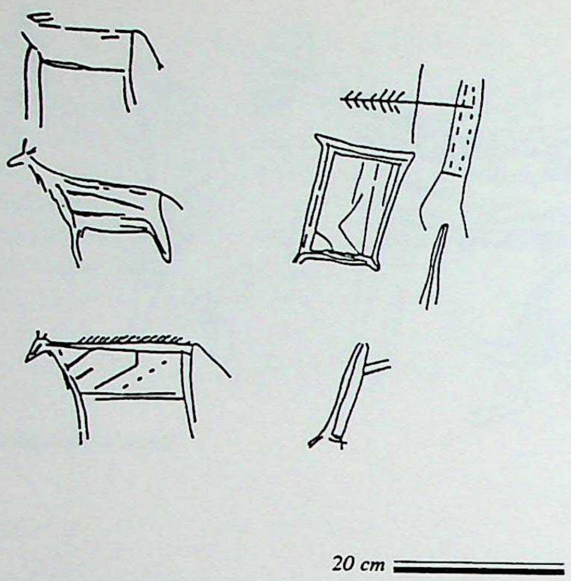


Fig.:**241**: Robertsganj - Kandakot

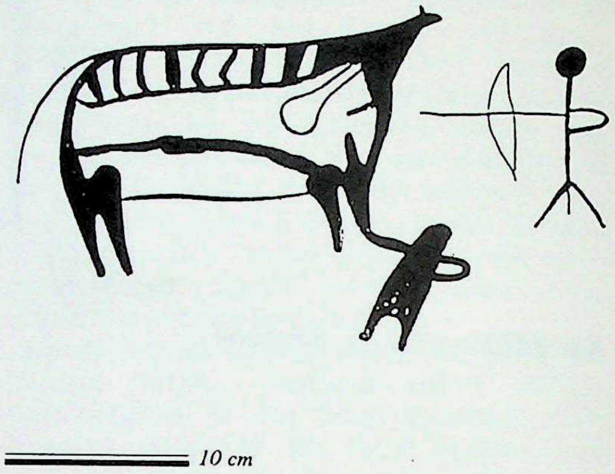


Fig.:**242**: Robertsganj - Kandakot

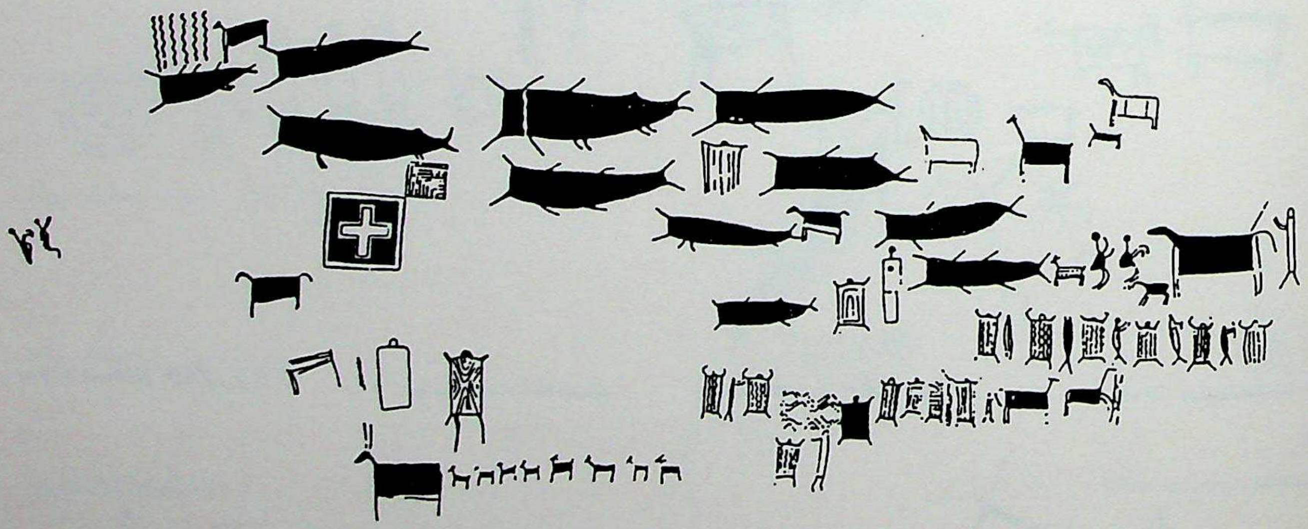


Fig.:**243**: Mukhaderi

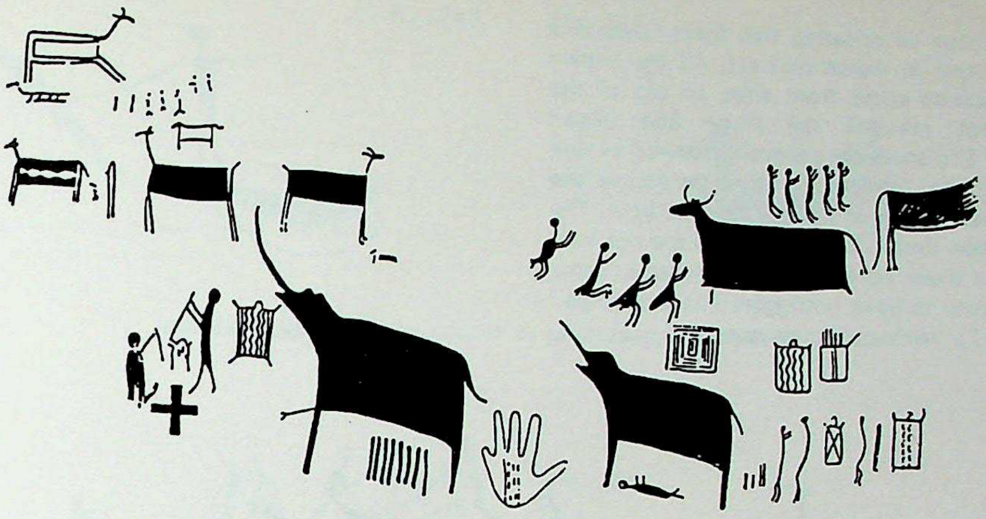


Fig.: ***245****: Mukhaderi*

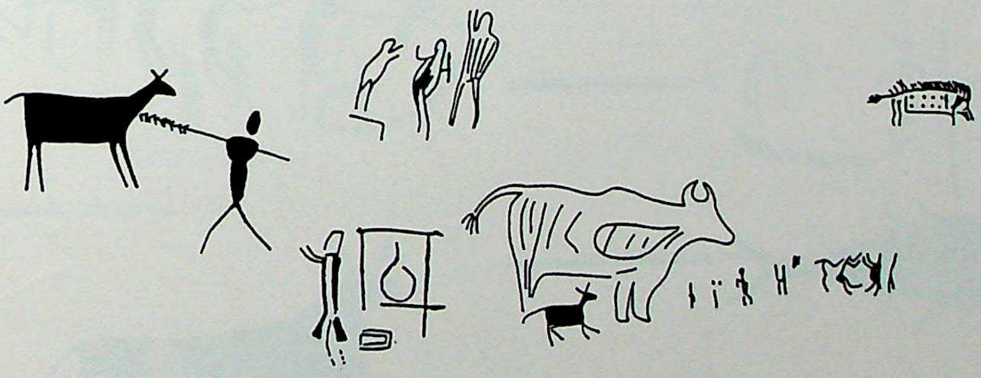


Fig.: ***244****: Mukhaderi*

The depiction of spearing fish from boats is a unique theme in Indian rock-art. All the known fishing scenes come from sites on top of the escarpment towards the River Son (Figs.: 246-53). The boats are generally manned by two persons, one at the stern handling the paddle, the other spearing fish or turtles from the bow. The construction details of these boats are not very clear from these sometimes tiny pictures. Some boats appear to have outriggers attached (Figs.: 248,250-2), while others have none.

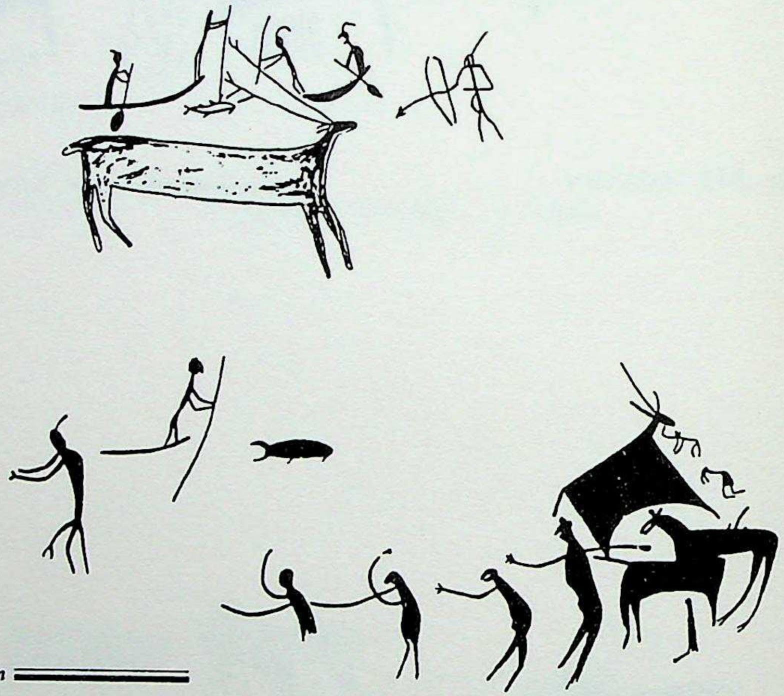


*Fig.:**246**: Kowar Khoh* 20 cm

*Fig.:**247**: Kowar Khoh* 20 cm

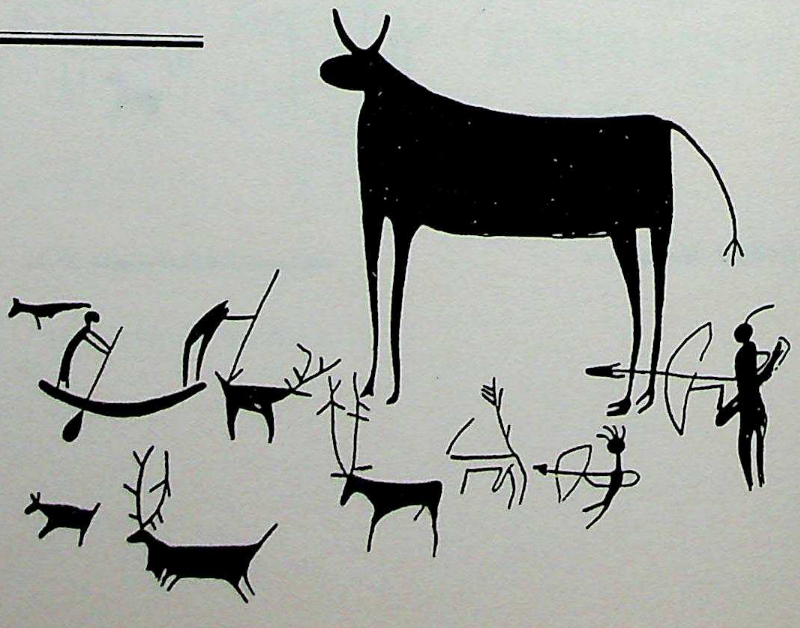


Fig.:248

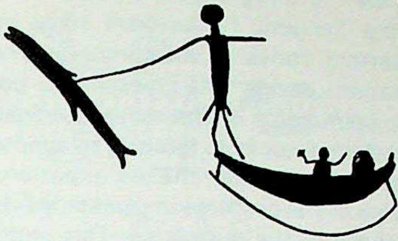
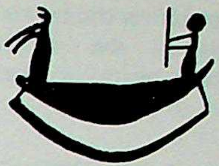


Fig.:251



10 cm

Fig.:249

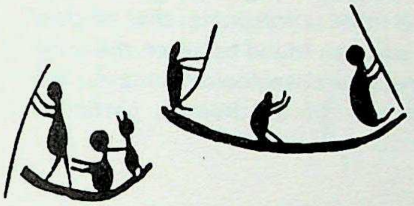
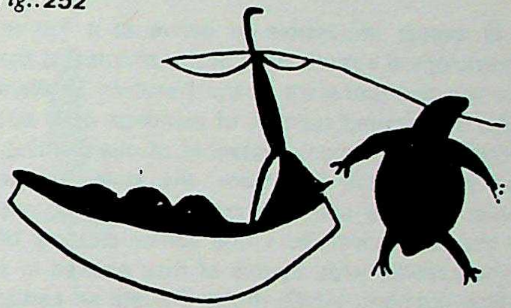


Fig.:252



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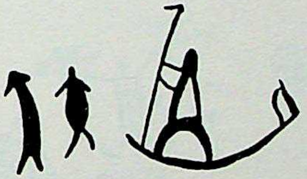

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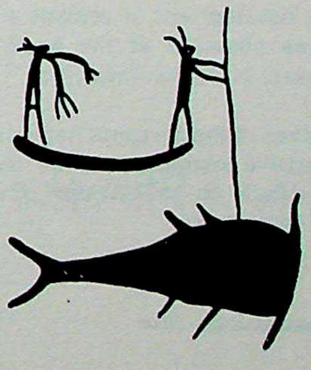


10 cm

Fig.:253

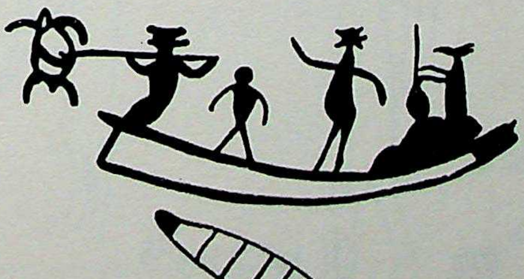


Fig.:250

*Fig.:**248**: Kerwaghat*
*Fig.:**249**: Kerwaghat*
*Fig.:**250**: Kerwaghat*
*Fig.:**251**: Kerwaghat*
*Fig.:**252**: Kerwaghat*
*Fig.:**253**: Gojara*

Several picture groups in the Mirzapur District show compositions of figures grouped in proximity to abstract signs or symbols. These symbols consist of concentric circles and radially attached squares at the periphery (Figs.: 238,254). In the vicinity of these symbols hunting-groups are to be found.

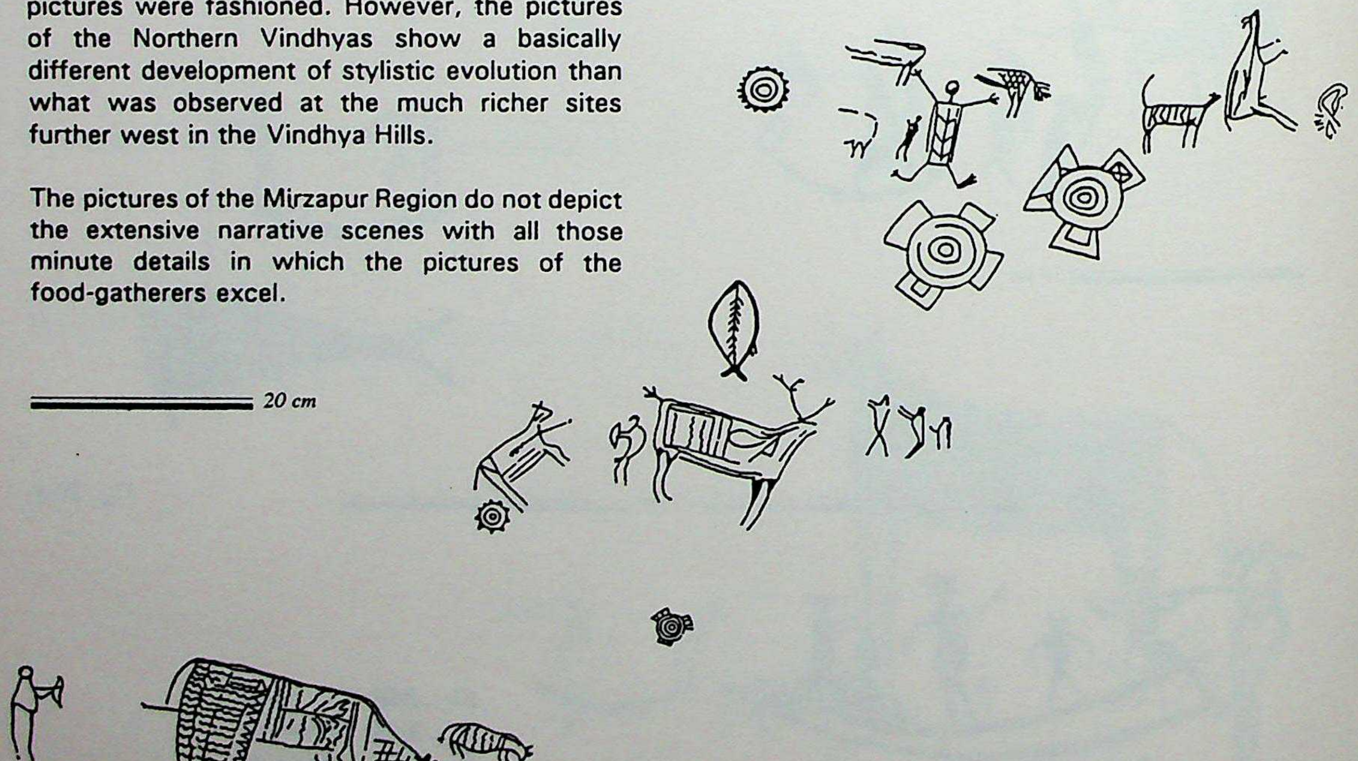
Depiction of rhinos is very common in the rock paintings of the Northern Vindhya Mountains, contrary to regions further west in the Vindhyas, where rhinos are very rare.
Several extensive scenes show hunts of rhinos (Fig.: 254) and a few scenes show the butchering of these animals (Figs.: 255-6).

It is almost impossible to derive at a further chronological stratification of the pictures of the hunters and gatherers in the Northern Vindhya Hills. The limited number of paintings does not furnish us with many instances of overpainting, and where I did find them, the styles of the earlier and later paintings matched. Only on one of the rock walls did I find earlier pictures of comparatively large figures of men painted in a yellow pigment, which might indicate an earlier rock painting stratum (Fig.: 257).
The homogenous stylistic and thematic content of the pictures of the hunters and gatherers may indicate a shorter span of time in which these pictures were fashioned. However, the pictures of the Northern Vindhyas show a basically different development of stylistic evolution than what was observed at the much richer sites further west in the Vindhya Hills.

The pictures of the Mirzapur Region do not depict the extensive narrative scenes with all those minute details in which the pictures of the food-gatherers excel.

This is al the more regrettable since the fringes towards the Gangetic Plains were some of the most important zones of indigenous economic transformation during the mesolithic period. From here stem some of the earliest indications of the transformation from foraging to agriculture and animal-domestication, the use of pottery and also complex burial customs in cemeteries during the later phase of the mesolithic. This region is, as far as prehistory is concerned, one of the best researched in India. From here were found the upperpalaeolithic bone artifact from Lohanda Nulla (Fig.: 13),(Misra,V.D., 1977:49), as also an "altar" consisting of a raised circular platform on which was a triangular engraved "idol" (IAR 1982/2:41). It is most unfortunate, that till now no connection has been found between the rock-art of this region and archaeological remains, like transportable pieces of art from a particular stratum.

*Fig.:***254***: Robertsganj - Panchmukhi Romp*



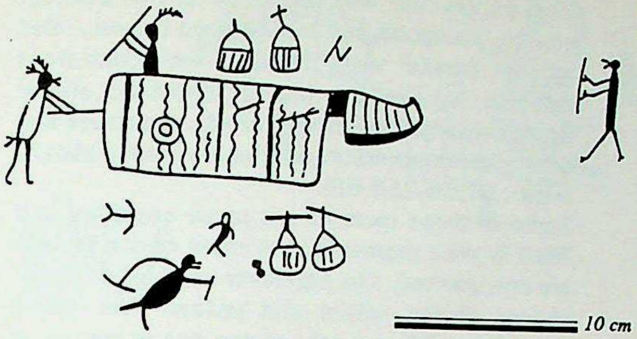


*Fig.:***255***: Kerwaghat*

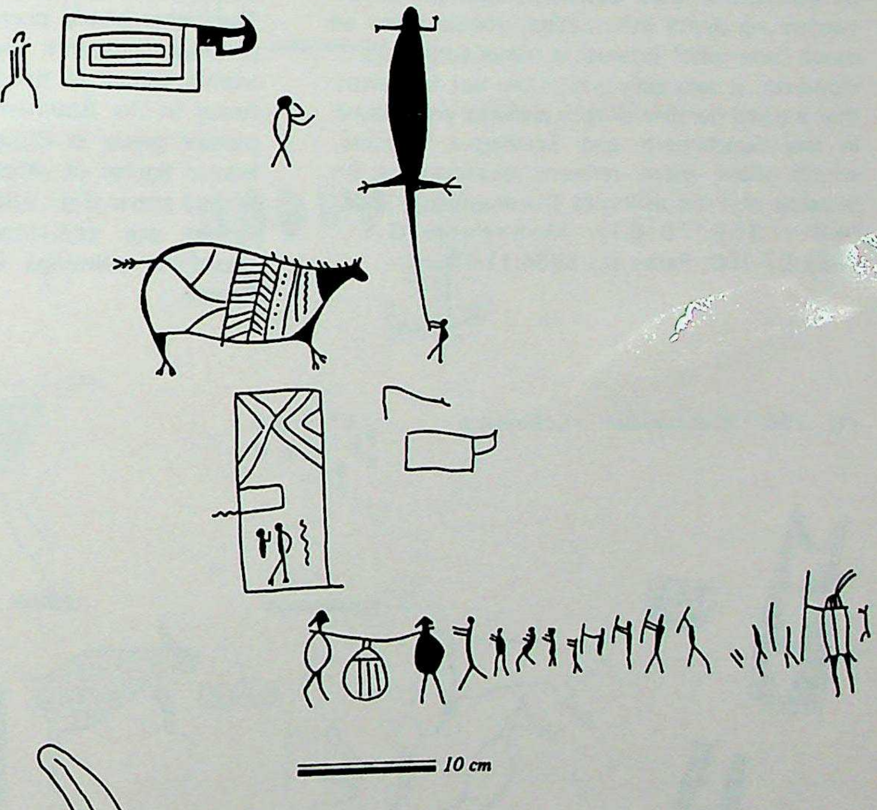


*Fig.:***256***: Kerwaghat*

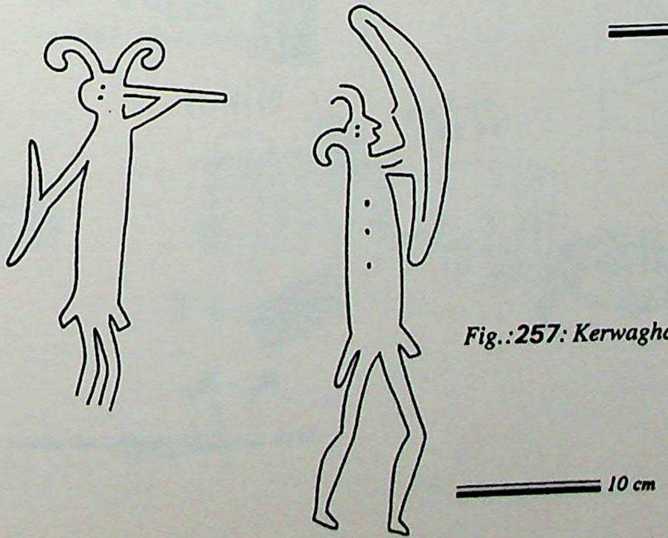


*Fig.:***257***: Kerwaghat*

Rock-art of a distinctly different style and technique was found in the Sambalpur and Sundargarh Districts of Orissa. These rock engravings and paintings show unique traits in their style and use of pictorial codes. The narrative progress of picture compositions is here replaced by abstract and zoomorph figures.

Although the first notices of this rock-art go back to the discovery of the Vikramkhole rock shelter in the twenties of this century, scientific interest centered mainly around the speculation whether or not these engravings and paintings were "letters" of a "Proto Brahmi Script" (Fabri,C.L., 1930-34:230, Pl CXIX a; Jayaswal,K.P., 1933:58-60; Chakravarti,N.P., 1936:229). That these pictorial remains, which on account of their extremely abstract nature convey no direct information, should draw so much "scientific" interest is rather surprising.

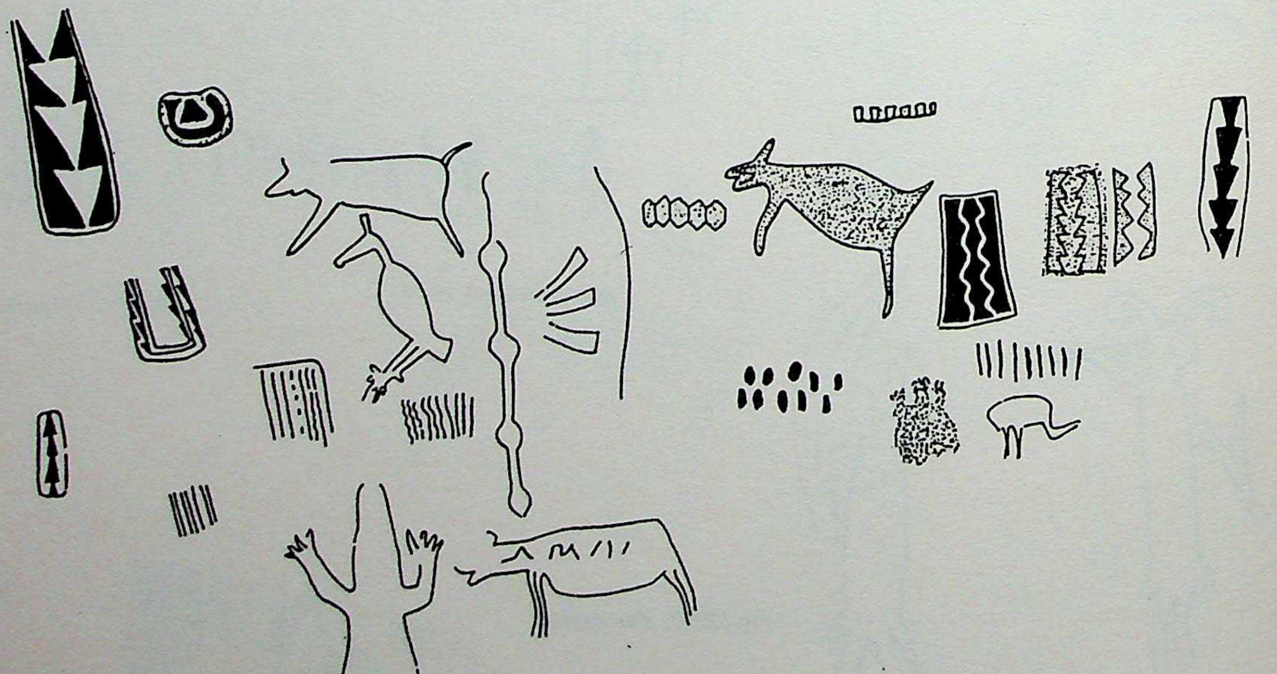
However, it was only within the last few years that a good number of rock pictures were found in the Sundargarh and Sambalpur Districts, which allow more relevant observations on possible stylistic affinities (Neumayer,E., 1988; IAR 1969/70:61; Mohapatra,G.C., 1982:97-100; Pathy,D., 1984:11-15).

The engravings and paintings show abstract square, triangular and oval-shaped figures, filled in with parallel wavy lines or with criss-cross patterns, as well as highly schematic animal figures resembling lizards, bovids, antelopes and birds. Anthropomorph figures are totally absent (Figs.: 31,36,258-68).

Some of these pictures are partly engraved and filled in with pigments, but most of the figures are only painted. The pigments used are different shades of red, white and yellow. The colour green I have found only at one site in traces. In all the pictures of this group no domesticated animals are depicted.

Several of the more abstract square figures show fillings in the "intricate design patterns" (Fig.: 36), familiar from mesolithic art all over India. The rather plump portrayal of animals in these pictures compares well stylistically with the animal figures of the later mesolithic paintings found in the Southern Deccan. Only a single picture group in Chhenga Pahar shows three human figures of which one holds a bow and a barbed arrow (Fig.: 268). These three very small figures are stylistically comparable to the mesolithic paintings in the Western Vindhya Region.

Fig.: ***258:*** *Chhengapahar - Lakhamara*



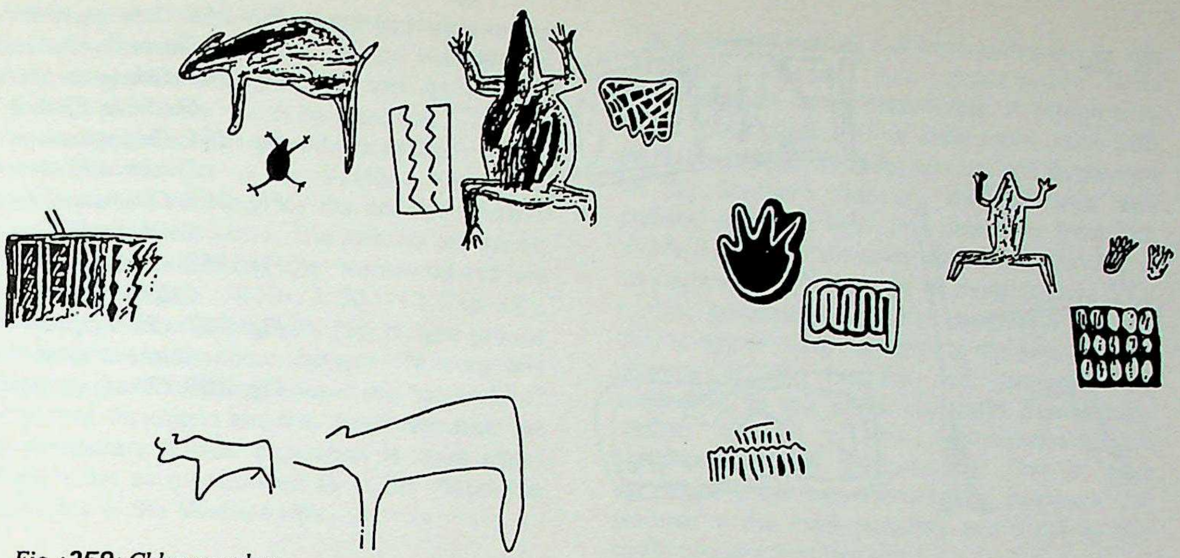


*Fig.:***259***: Chhengapahar-
Lakhamara*

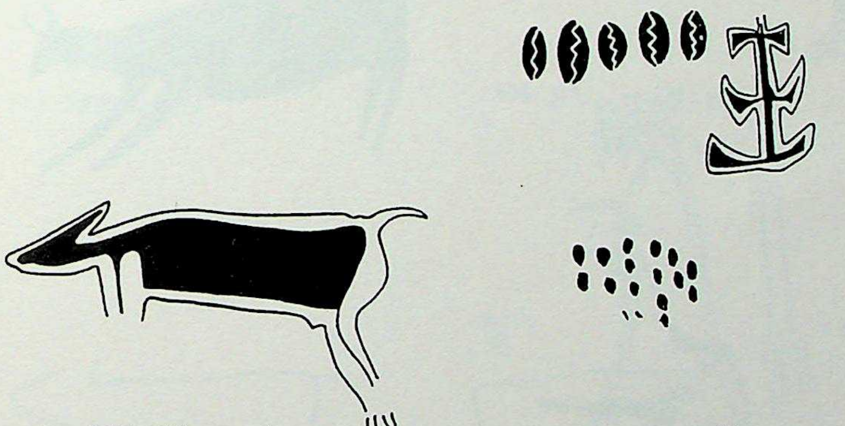


*Fig.:***260***: Chhengapahar-
Lakhamara*

*Fig.:***261***: Phuldungri*

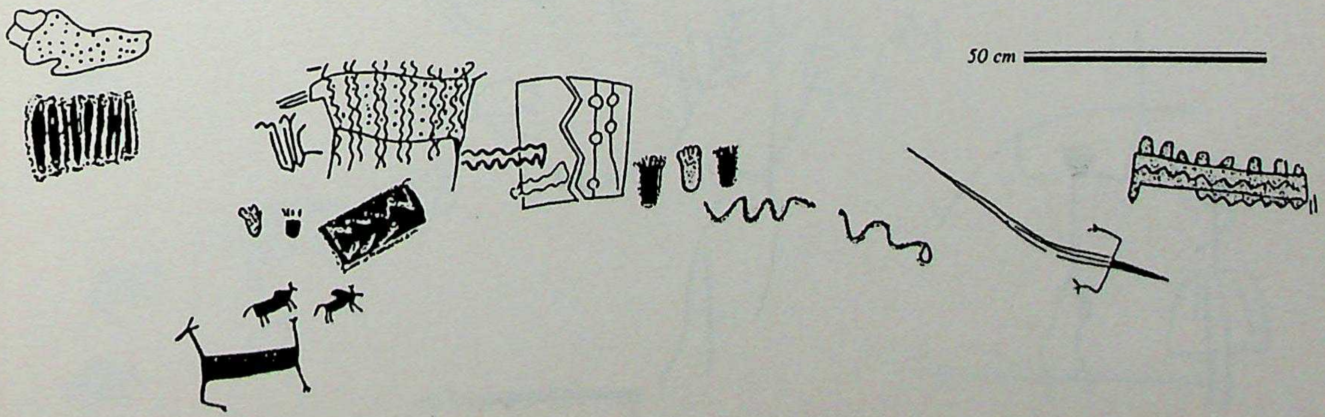
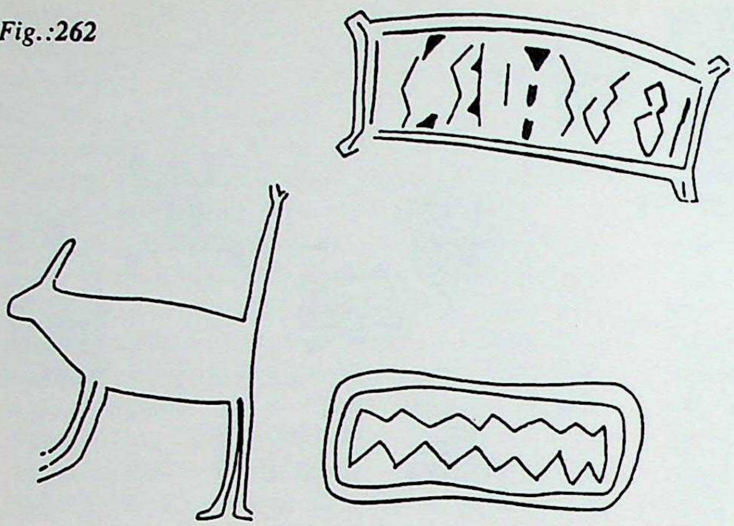


Fig.:**262**: *Chhengapahar-Chichiria Khol*
Fig.:**263**: *Chhengapahar-Chichiria Khol*
Fig.:**264**: *Chhengapahar-Chichiria Khol*
Fig.:**265**: *Chhengapahar-Chichiria Khol*
Fig.:**266**: *Chhengapahar-Chichiria Khol*
Fig.:**267**: *Chhengapahar-Chichiria Khol*
Fig.:**268**: *Chhengapahar*

Fig.:262



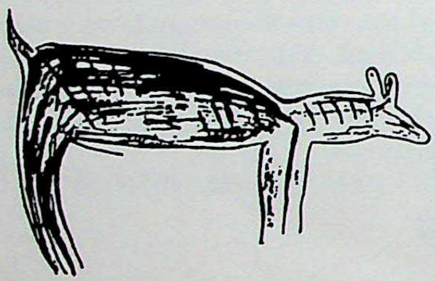
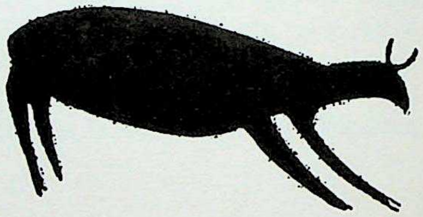


Fig.:263

Fig.:264



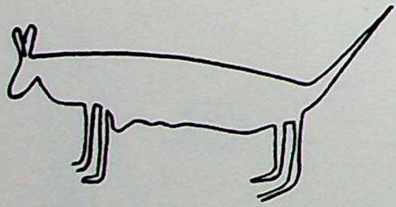


Fig.:265

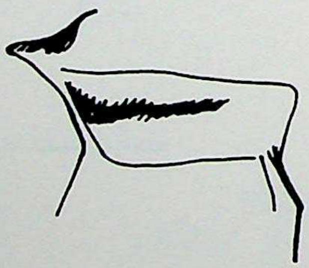


Fig.:266

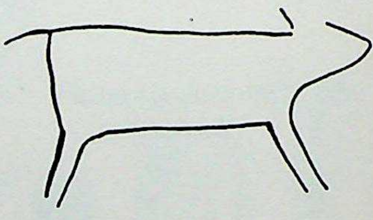


Fig.:267

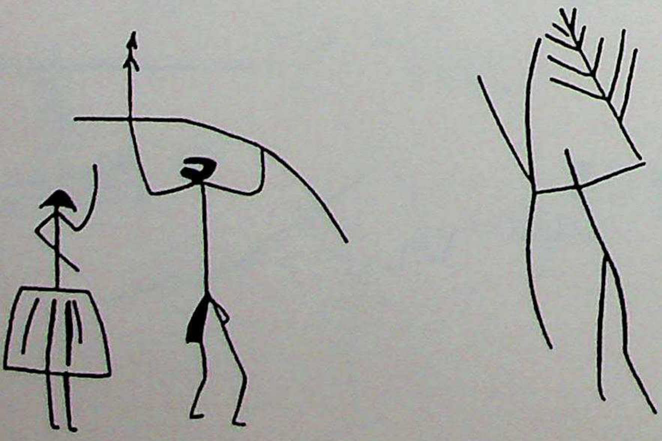


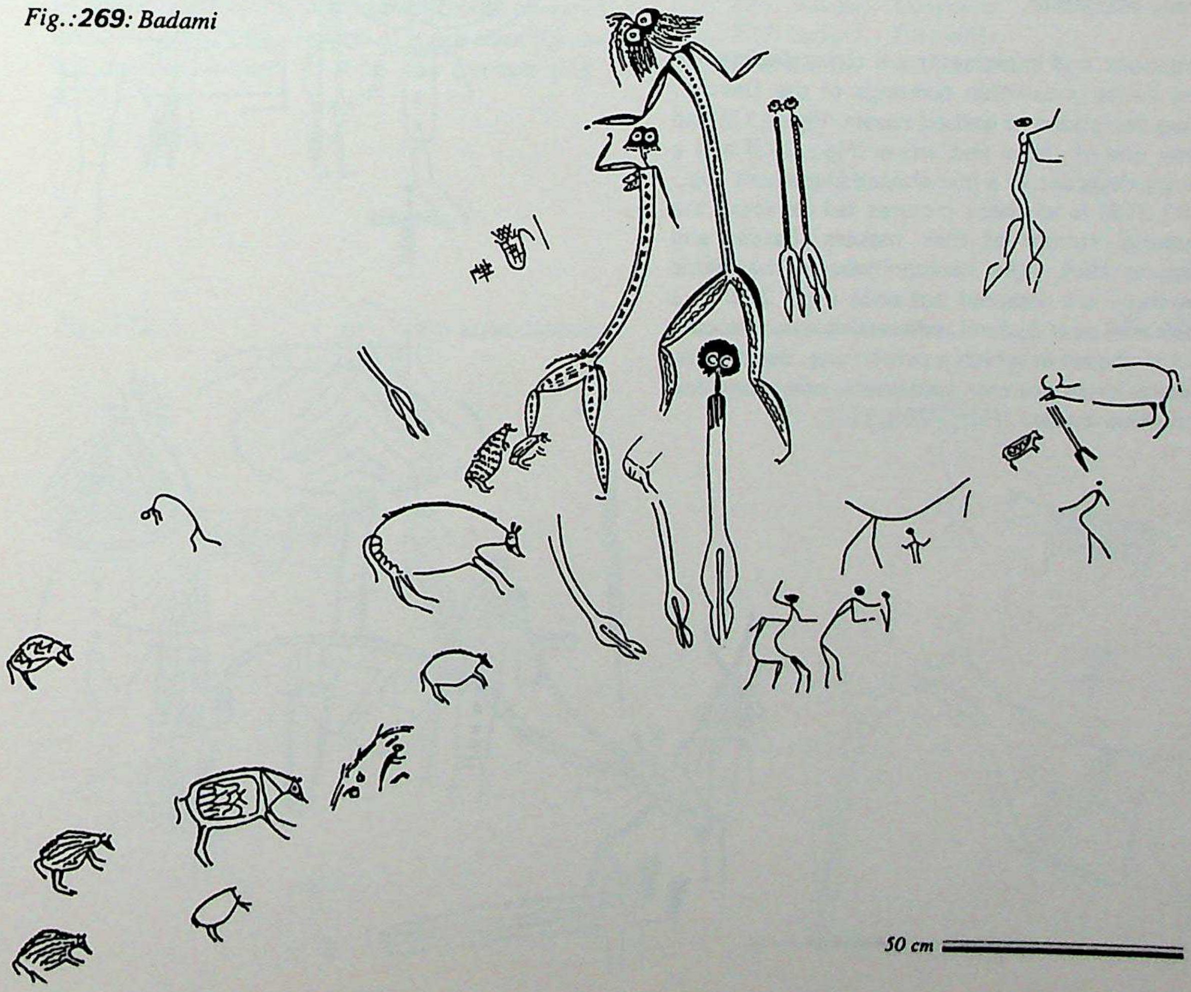
Fig.:268

.Within the rock-art of the food-gatherers in the Southern Deccan, two more or less well-defined stylistic groups --which here will be labelled "earlier" and "later"-- can be identified.

The earlier group corresponds stylistically to the mesolithic rock-art in the Vindhya Region. In particular the drawings of the animals show a high degree of similarity. The animals are drawn quite naturalistic, while the human figures are stylized (Figs.: 269-77,301-13,316-32). Although there are only very few picture groups which show interactions between animals and humans, the dichotomy between the "naturalism" of animal depictions and the "schematization" of contemporary human depictions is quite clear, even if not as pronounced as in the mesolithic paintings of the Vindhya Hills.

The rock pictures of the food-gatherers in the Southern Deccan are stylistically and chronologically better classifiable. Although only about thirty sites with a little more than 100 painted surfaces were found over the huge area of the Southern Deccan, the thematic and stylistic relations with the paintings from the Vindhya Regions allow us to draw conclusions concerning the chronology of these pictures. Of further advantage for the evaluation of the chronology of these paintings is the fact that the pictures of the hunters and gatherers are succeeded by the stylistically and thematically distinct pictures of the neolithic/chalcolithic cattle-keepers and agriculturists. This at least serves as a general demarcation between the pictures of the food-gatherers and those of the cattle-keepers and farmers.

*Fig.:**269**: Badami*



Narrative scenes are rarely found in the rock-art of the Southern Deccan. Most pictures are in a very fragmentary state of preservation. The more important early paintings come from sites in the ragged sandstone massif in the vicinity of Badami in the Bijapur District of Karnataka. The human figures in these paintings show a very elegant style, in which the body is extremely elongated, while the legs are drawn quite strong and detailed (Figs.: 269,317-24). The extreme dichotomy between male and female figures, so pronounced in the mesolithic art in the Vindhyas is absent in the paintings of the hunters and gatherers of the Southern Deccan.

Eyes were prominently drawn in human figures (Figs.: 269,320-6) as well as in animal figures (Figs.: 269-70). Humans are invariably shown with two eyes, which means that the head is drawn *en face* (Figs.: 118,272-6,278-80), while the animals' heads are shown in profile so that only one eye is visible. This is a remarkable contrast to the mesolithic pictures from the Vindhya Hills, where eyes are hardly ever shown in animals and still more rarely in humans. *En face* depictions of human figures are unknown there altogether.

Weapons and implements are rarely depicted in the earlier mesolithic paintings of the Deccan. Two depictions of barbed spears (Fig.: 113) and only one of bow and arrow (Fig.: 333) and a single depiction of a hoe-shaped implement (Fig.: 232,319) is all these pictures tell us about the material culture of their makers. Basket and digging stick --the paraphernalia of mesolithic women-- are depicted but once (Fig.: 269) at a rock wall near Badami, where also a constructed hut is shown in which a person sits. Besides the person there are two containers, one round and the other square (Figs.: 269,320).

More detailed than weapons and implements are the portrayals of the hairdo and head decorations. At the site of Velary Kombay in the Nilgiri District of Tamil Nadu these head decorations are of fantastic dimensions (Figs.: 270,328,332). Women are shown wearing braids which at times seem to have been decorated with feathers(?).

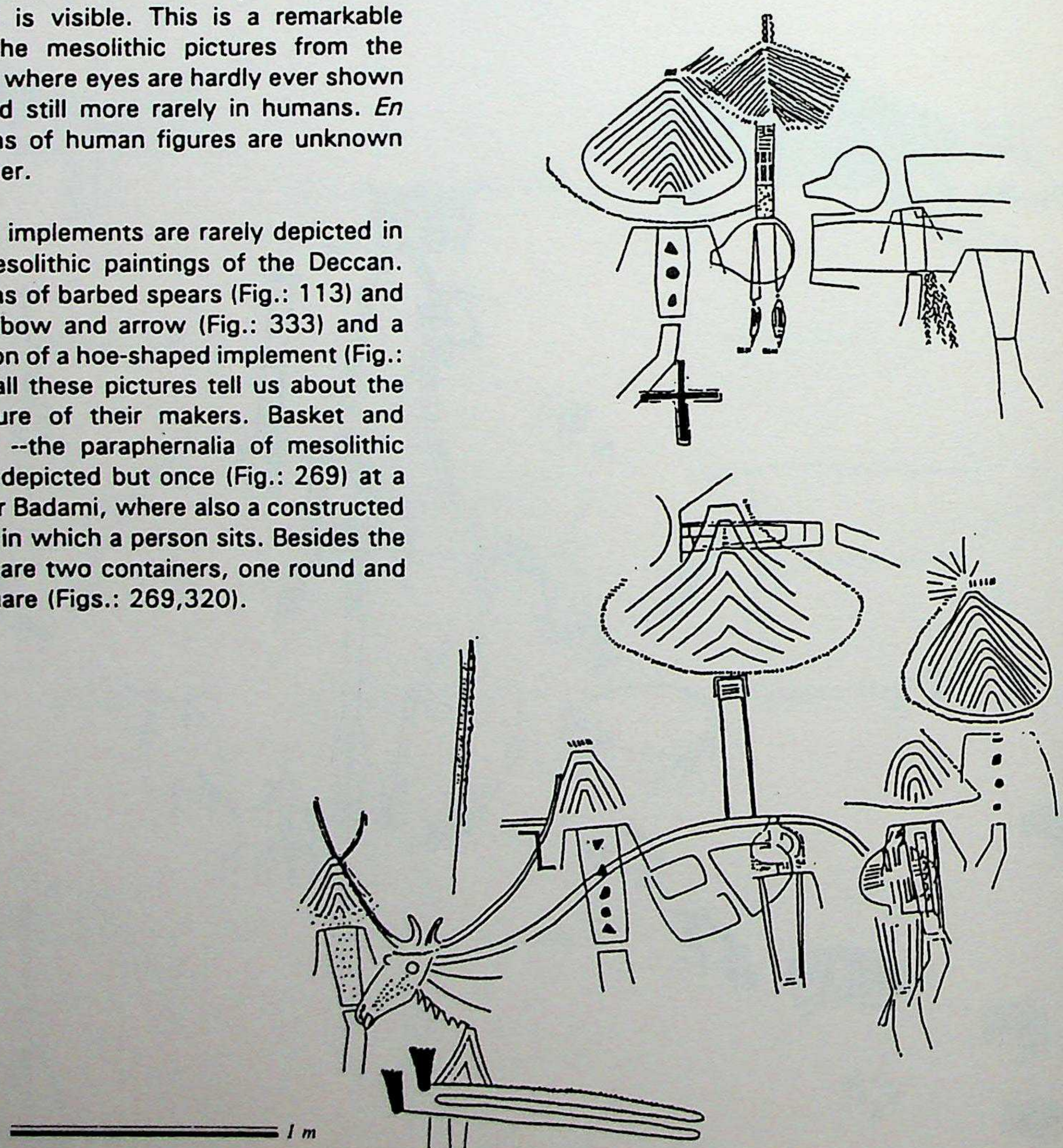


*Fig.:**270:** Velary Kombay*

The clothes for both sexes consist of a single piece of fabric, worn around the waist, with a train falling down in front and in the back. The upper body seem to have been left bare in both sexes. But it should be remembered that the portrayal of humans is too schematic to understand detailed features like clothes or body decorations. Several depictions of humans are decorated with intricate rhombic patterns (Figs.: 278-9,337-8,340).

Pictures showing the interaction between men and animals or between humans themselves are rarely understandable. The partial conservation of the picture groups obscures probable narrative elements.
In Hiregudda near Pattadkal there is a painting of a man and a woman who are followed by a very large boar. The man holds a bow(?) in one hand (Fig.: 271). The picture shows the heart and lungs of the boar in a "naturalistic X-ray style", while the abdomen is filled in "decorative X-ray style".

Several other paintings show antelopes, in front of which persons are seen standing with upraised arms (Figs.: 272-6). Several of these male figures are detailed enough to show the genitals (Fig.: 272).

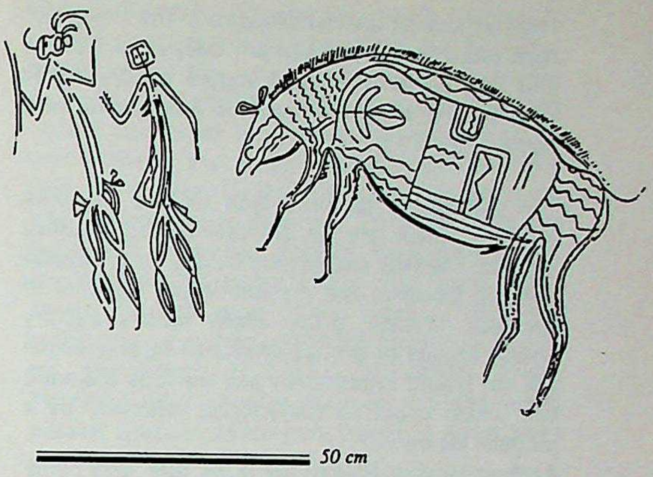
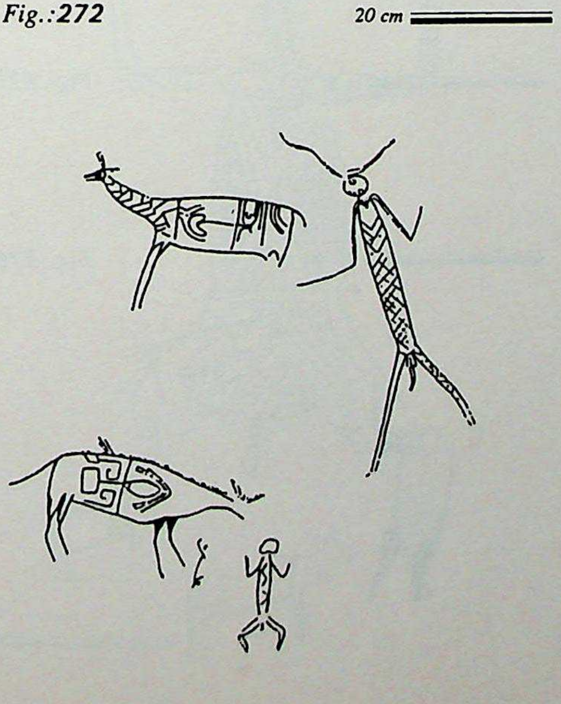


*Fig.:**271***

*Fig.:**271**: Badami - Hiregudda*
*Fig.:**272**: Badami - Hiregudda*
*Fig.:**273**: Badami - Hiregudda*

*Fig.:**272***



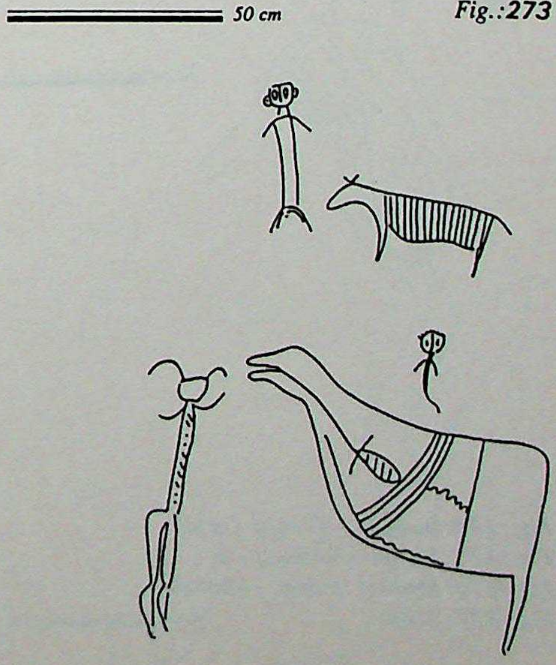
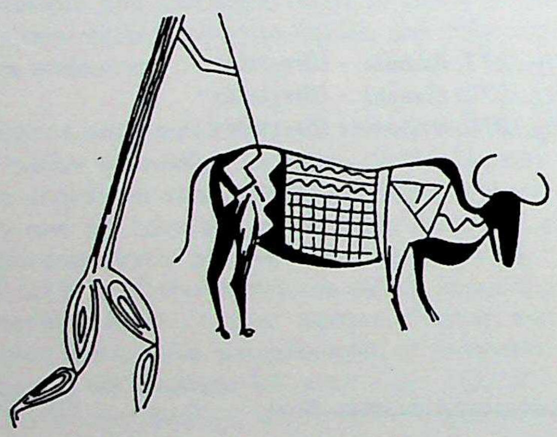


*Fig.:**273***

Hunting scenes are not available in the mesolithic rock pictures in the Southern Deccan. A solitary and only partly preserved picture shows a man who thrusts his spear into the hindquarter of a bovid (Fig.: 277).

The mesolithic pictures lack all the narrative aspects which are so obvious in the Vindhya Region. The few exceptions belong to the earlier stylistic group of the mesolithic art. Pictures of the later stylistic group show mostly solitary animal figures or groups of animal figures which are not bound together by any obvious thematic link which could be understood rationally by a modern viewer.
Anthropomorph figures are quite rare, and come almost exclusively from sites in the Benakal Forest and from the regions in the vicinity of the ancient city of Vijayanagar (Figs.: 334-44).

Fig.:277



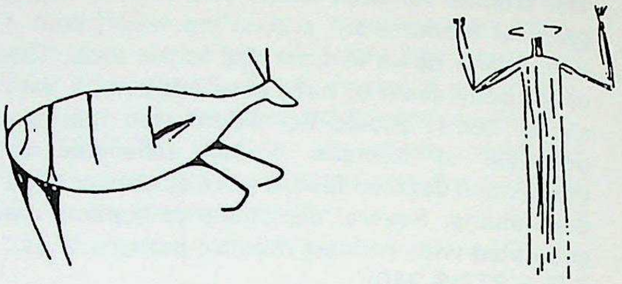


Fig.:274

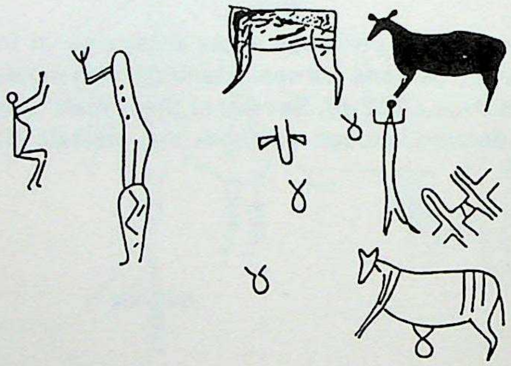


Fig.:275

Fig.:276

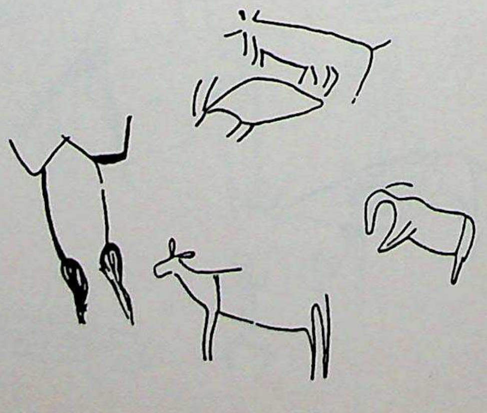


Fig.:274: Badami - Timupa Gudda
Fig.:275: Hampi - Venkatapura
Fig.:276: Benakal Forest - Mallapur
Fig.:277: Badami

Most animals depicted are herbivores (3), which account for about 75% of all animal figures available. Pigs, antelopes and bovids account for approximately half of the herbivores; the other half's species cannot be identified. Carnivorous animals are numerically rare, but very prominently depicted wherever they are found (Figs.: 290-1). Fish are quite common and available at all rock-art sites (Figs.: 281-6,349). Rhinos and birds are conspicuously absent in the rock-art of the Southern Deccan.

The large depiction of a man on the inclined ceiling in a shelter near Mallapur in the Benakal Forest is a good example for the more naturalistic treatment of the human body (Fig.: 278).
Figures of women are mostly drawn in profile, with a bent-forward upper body, and the hands held upwards. In this way only one leg and often only one arm is shown (Figs.: 279,237-41). But as already mentioned, since anthropomorphs are not very common in this group, stylistic conventions are not very well defined. Still, it seems that within this style the two distinct conventions to depict humans are contemporaneous. While there are the rather naturalistic depictions of male figures which are often strictly *en face,* the women are in profile, with bent forward body.

In the later mesolithic pictures, mainly herbivores are drawn. These pictures lack the elegance and movement of the earlier pictures of this period. A significant stylistic difference between the animal figures of the earlier and later styles is that while in the earlier animal depictions four legs are shown, in the later only one front leg and one hind leg is depicted. These later figures are drawn somewhat roughly. Several figures of this stylistic group are rather big, some of the animal figures more than life-size, and the application of colour, given the large size, apt to be heavy-handed (Figs.: 287-300). These paintings were mostly done in red and white parallel lines, of which only traces of white have remained.
The dichotomy of "naturalistic" animals versus "schematic" human depictions has obviously been given up in these paintings. Some of the anthropomorphs are surprisingly "naturalistic".

Another group of anthropomorphs is represented by figures *en face*, which at times are transformed to almost geometrical symbols (Figs.: 342-5).

*Fig.:**278**: Benakal Forest - Mallapur*

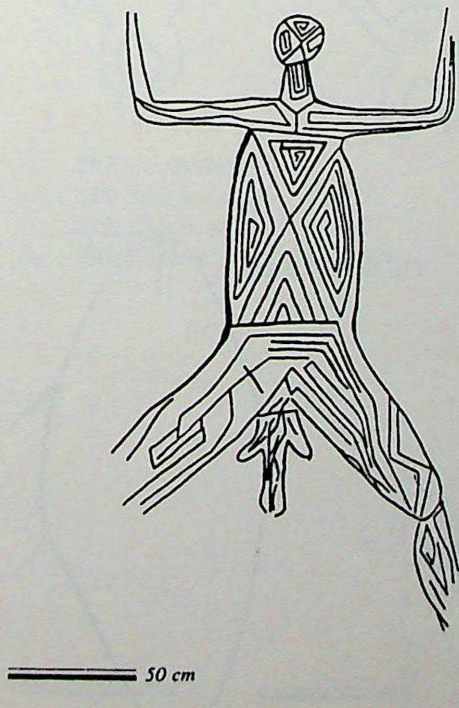
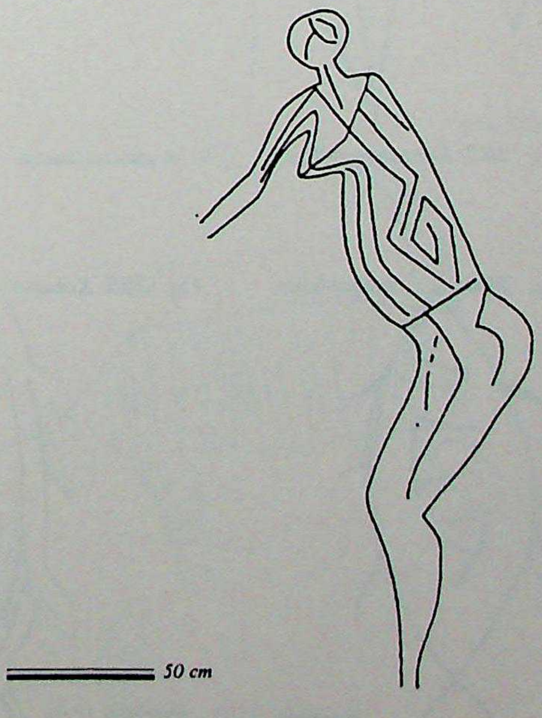


*Fig.:**279**(from Fig.:126): Benakal Forest*



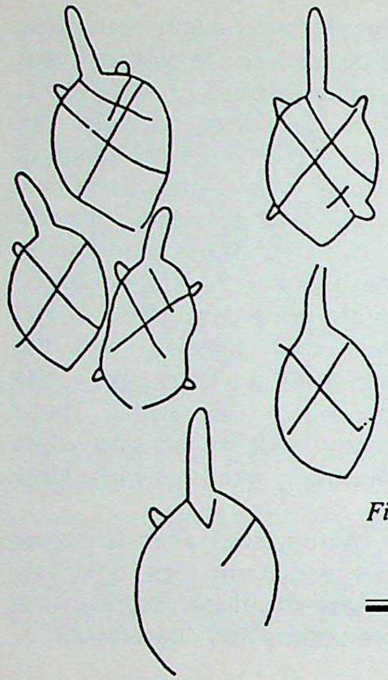


Fig.: ***280***: *Sanganunpalli*

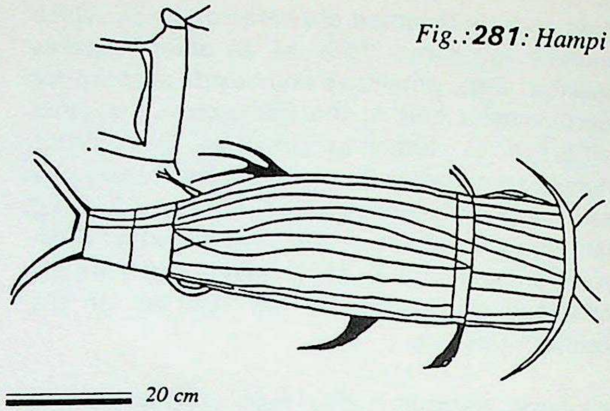


Fig.: ***281***: *Hampi*

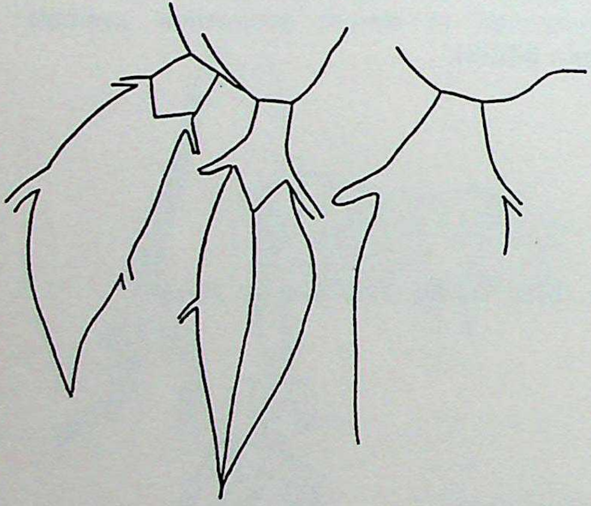


Fig.: ***282***: *Sanganunpalli*

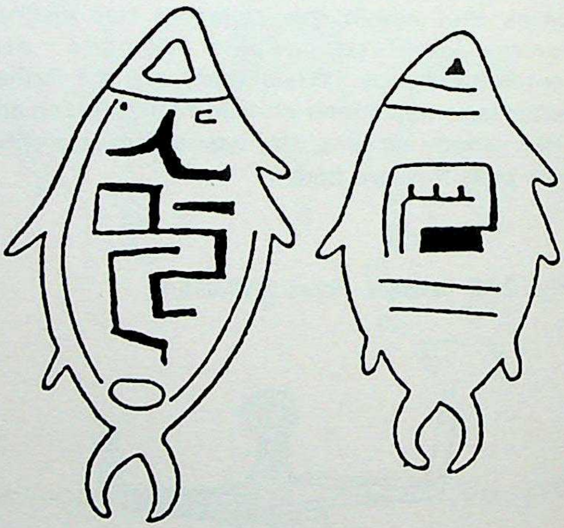


Fig.: ***283****(from Fig.:349): Settavaray*

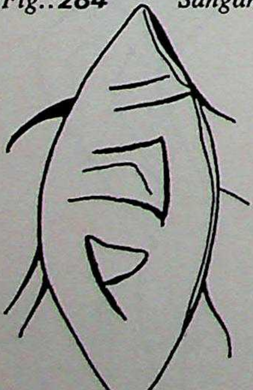


Fig.: ***284*** *Sangankallu*

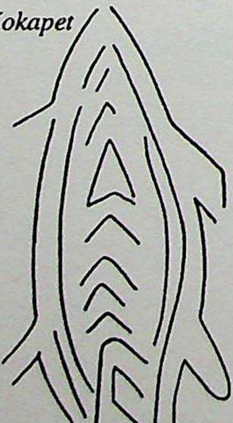


Fig.: ***285***: *Kokapet*

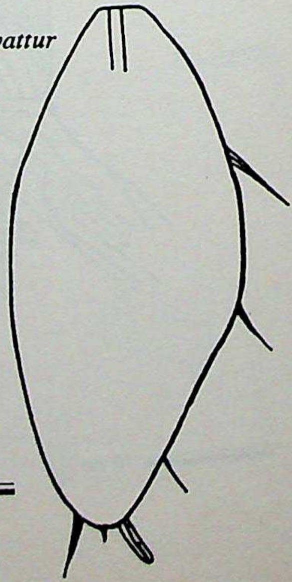


Fig.: ***286***: *Odyattur*

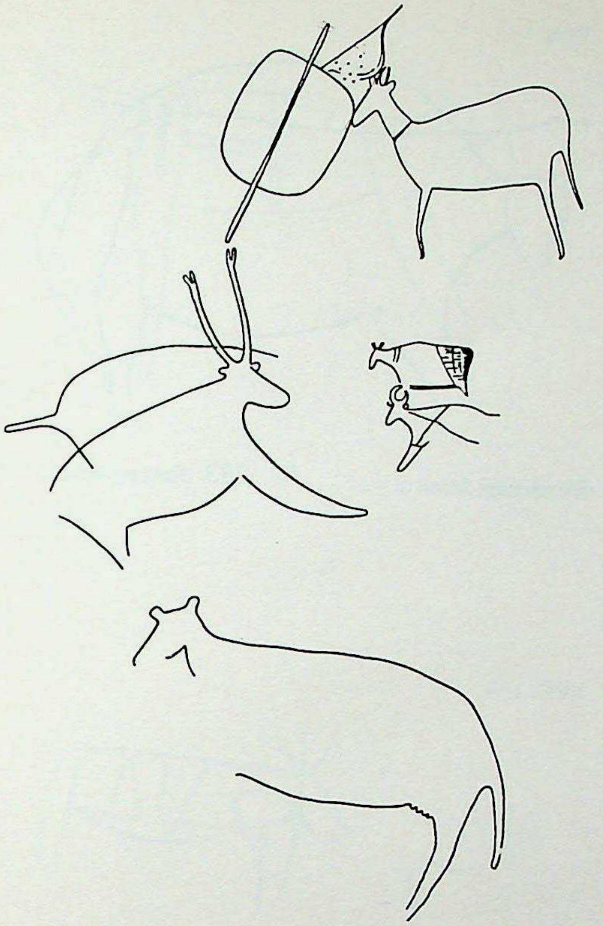


*Fig.:***287**

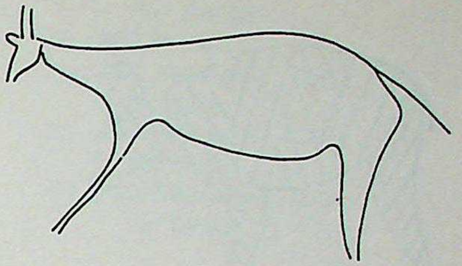


*Fig.:***288**

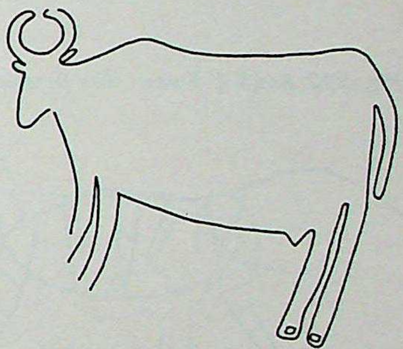


*Fig.:***289**

*Fig.:***287***: Settavaray*
*Fig.:***288***: Sanganunpalli*
*Fig.:***289***: Chintakunta*
*Fig.:***290***: Badami - Timupa Gudda*

*Fig.:***290**

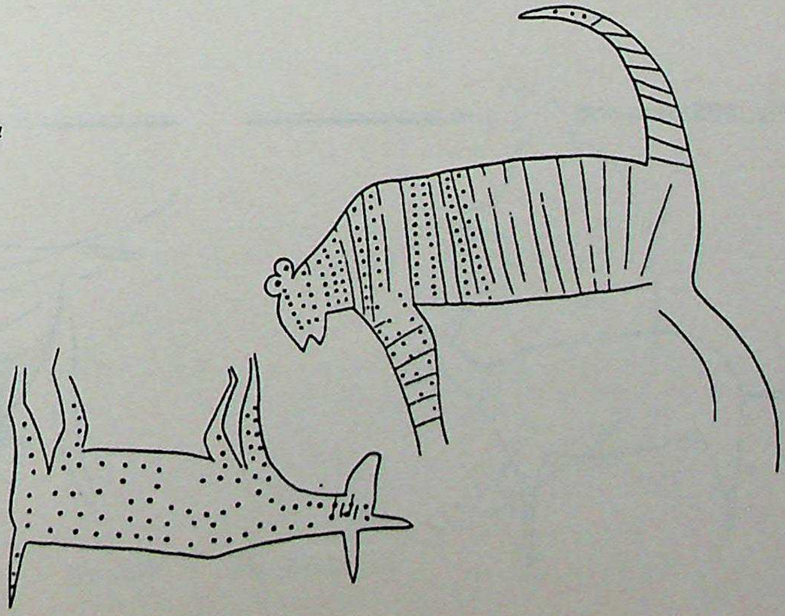
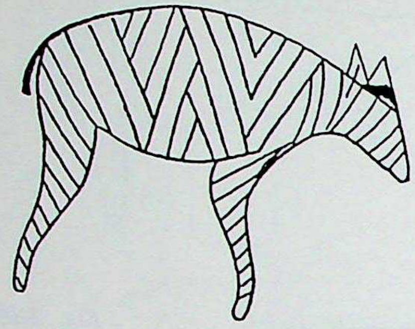


*Fig.:**291**: Badami - Aregudda*



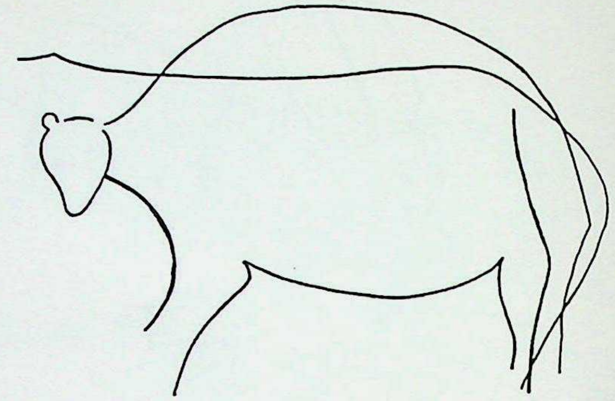


*Fig.:**293**: Sanganunpalli*

*Fig.:**292**: Benakal Forest- Hire Benakal*

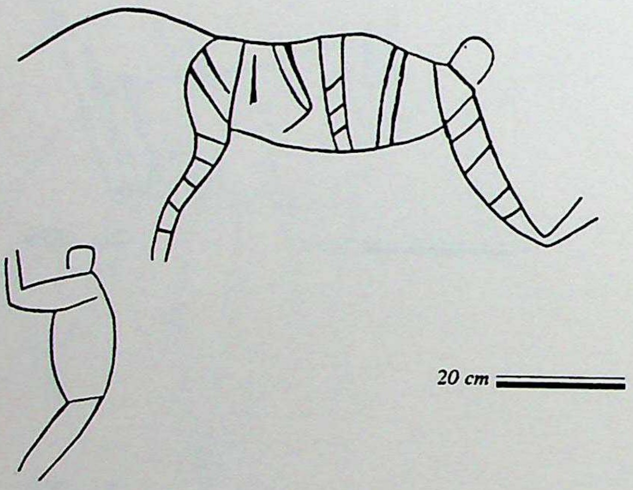


*Fig.:**295**: Settavaray*

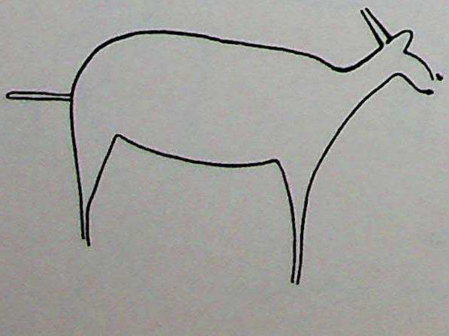


*Fig.:**294**: Ketavaram*

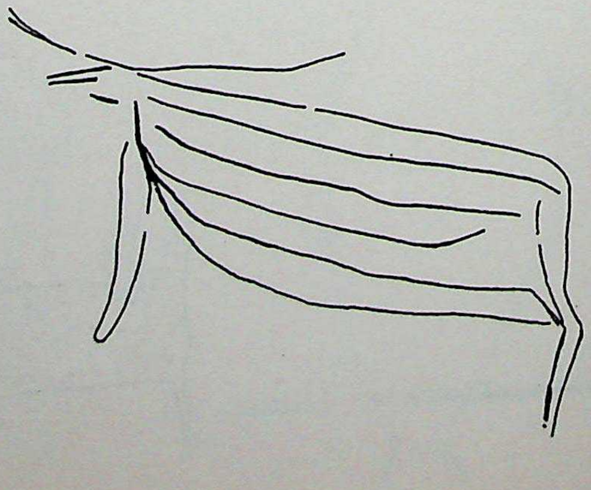


*Fig.:***296***: Benakal Forest-*
Hire Benakal
*Fig.:***297***: Piklihal*
*Fig.:***298***: Henanegala Galge*
(Sri Lanka)
*Fig.:***299***: Henanegala Galge*
(Sri Lanka)
*Fig.:***300***: Henanegala Galge*
(Sri Lanka)

*Fig.:***296**

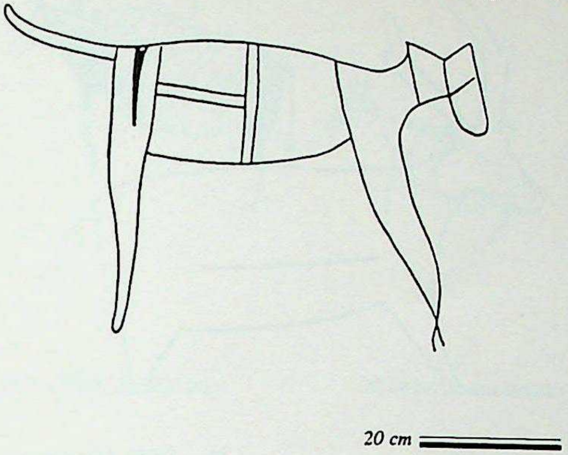
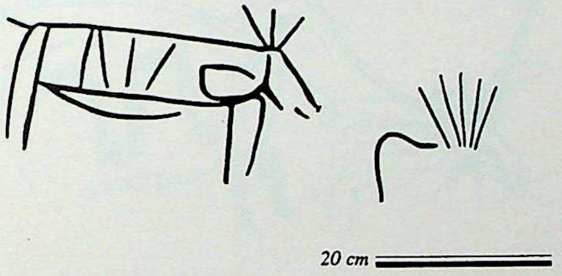


*Fig.:***297**



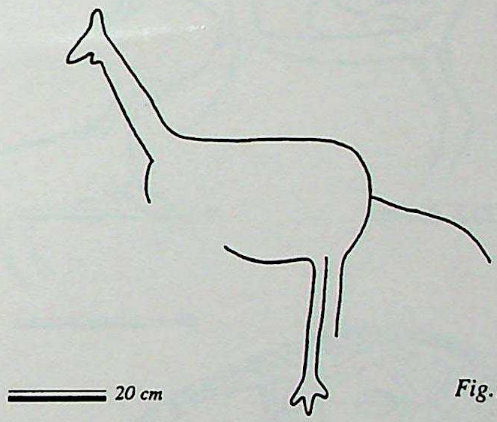


*Fig.:***298**

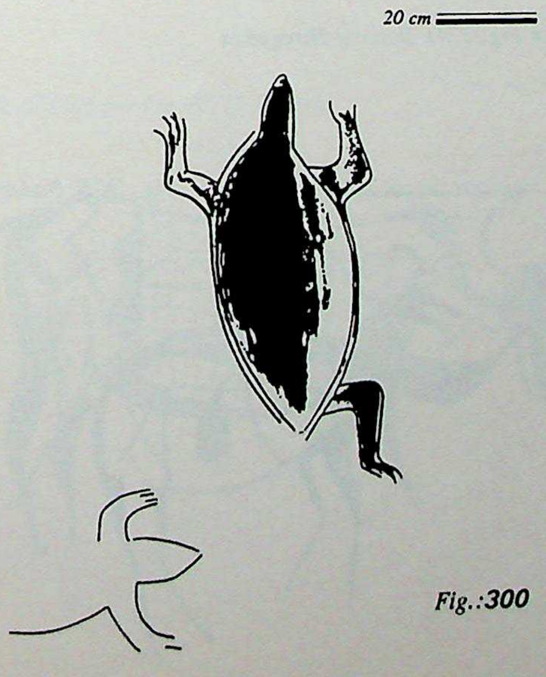


*Fig.:***300**

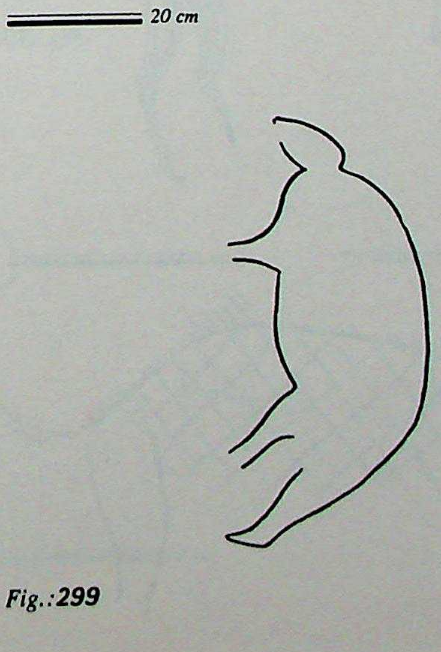


*Fig.:***299**

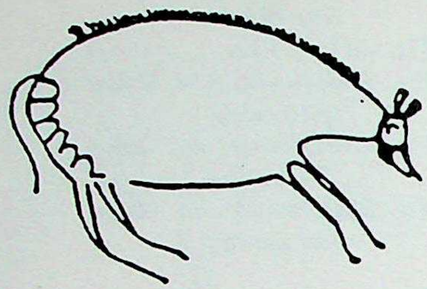
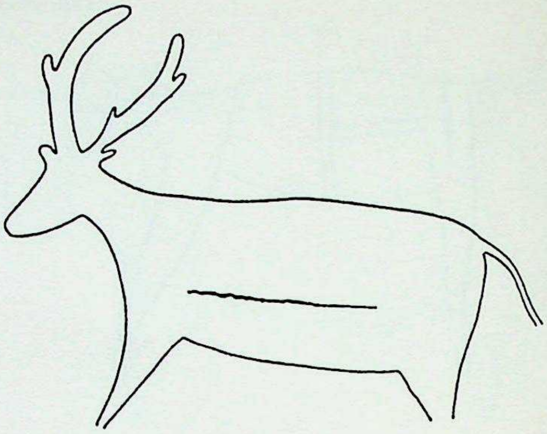


*Fig.:***301***: Badami* *20 cm*



10 cm *Fig.:***305***: Settavaray*

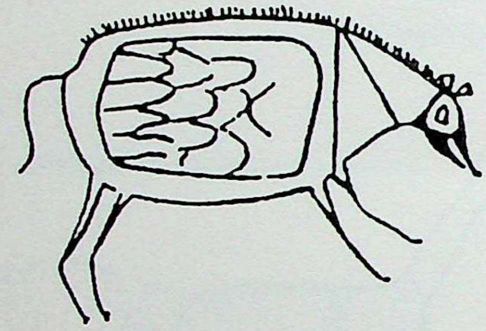
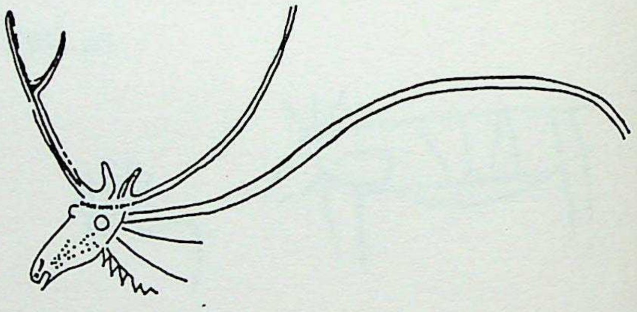


*Fig.:***302***: Badami* *10 cm*



50 cm *Fig.:***307***: Velary Kombay*

20 cm

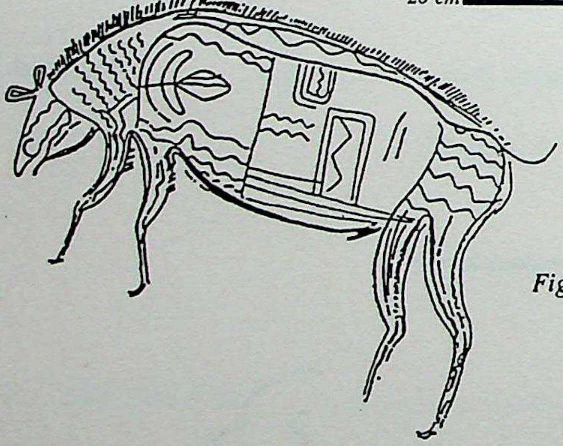
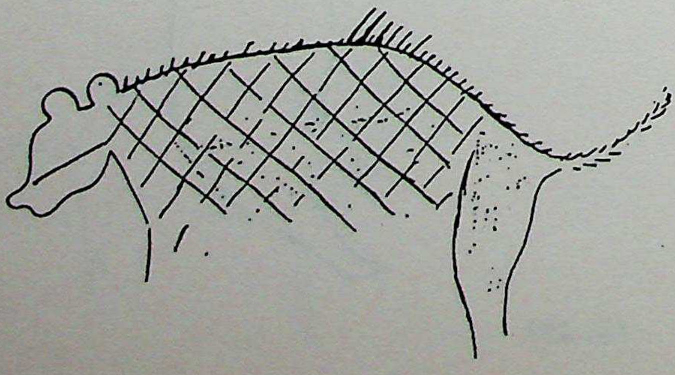
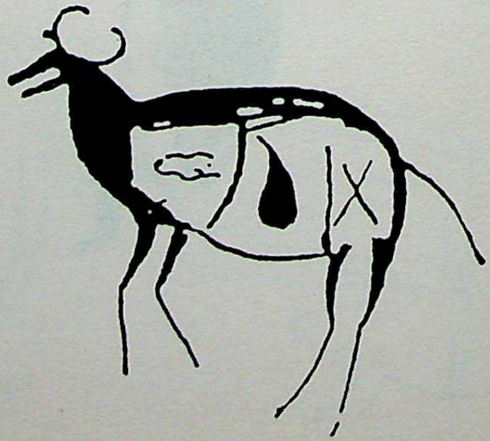


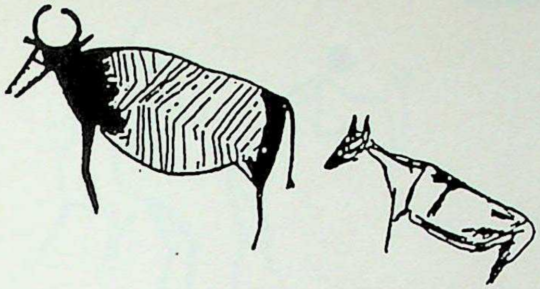
*Fig.:***303***(from Fig.:271): Badami-Hiregudda*

5 cm *Fig.:***306***: Badami*

*Fig.:***304***: Settavaray* *10 cm*







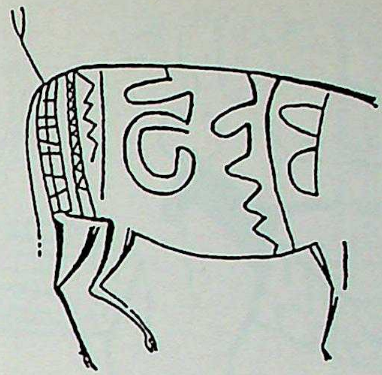


*Fig.:***308***: Settavaray*

20 cm

10 cm

*Fig.:***311***: Badami*

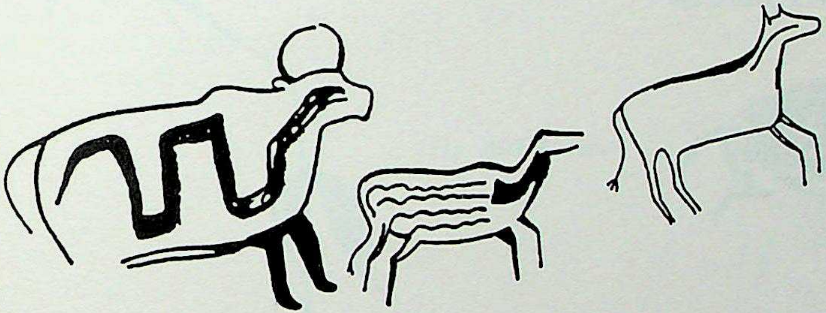
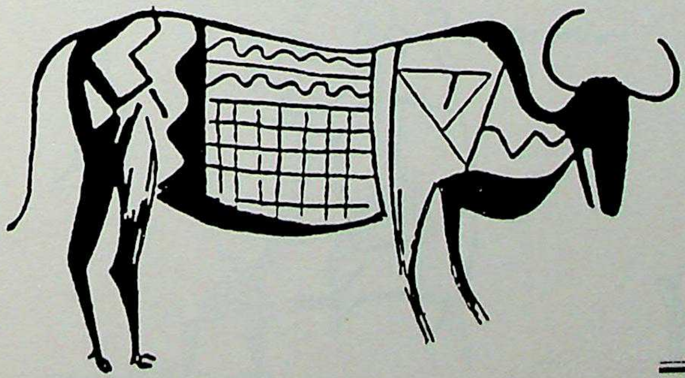


*Fig.:***309***(from Fig.:347): Alampadi*

10 cm

*Fig.:***310***(from Fig.:277): Badami*



10 cm

*Fig.:**312**: Badami*

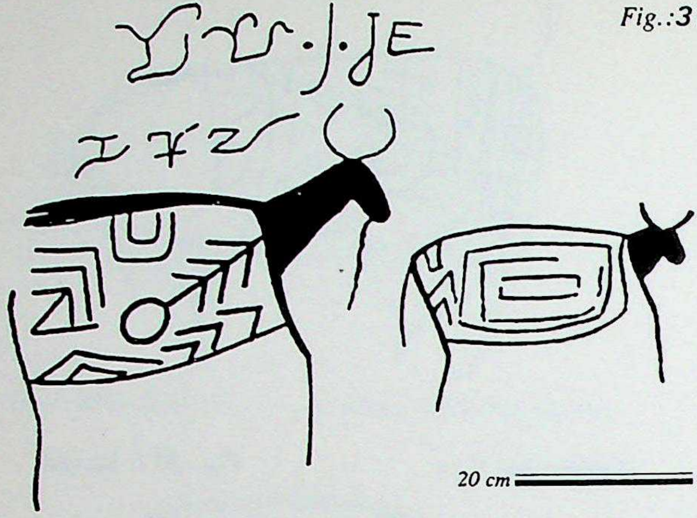
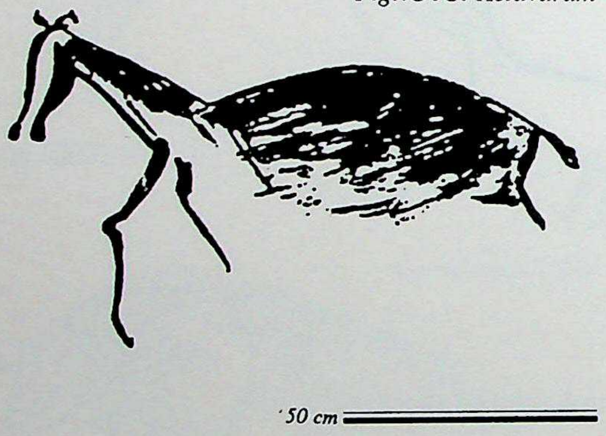


*Fig.:**313**: Ketavaram*



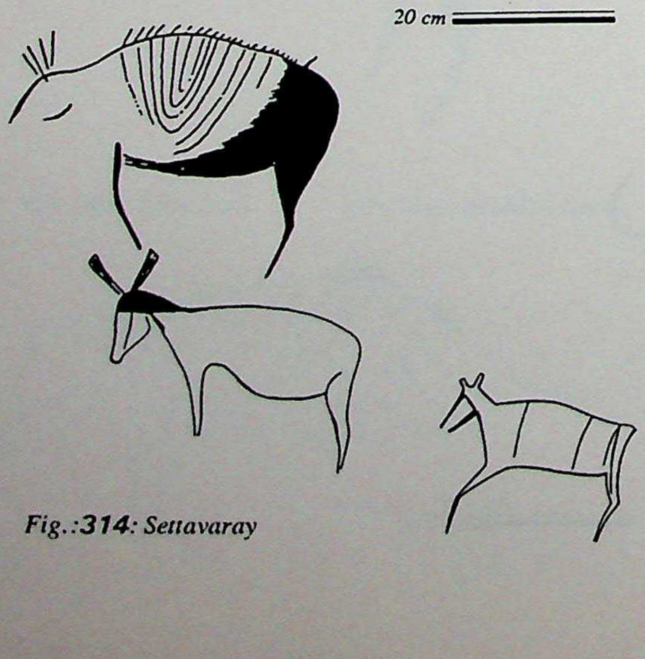


*Fig.:**314**: Settavaray*

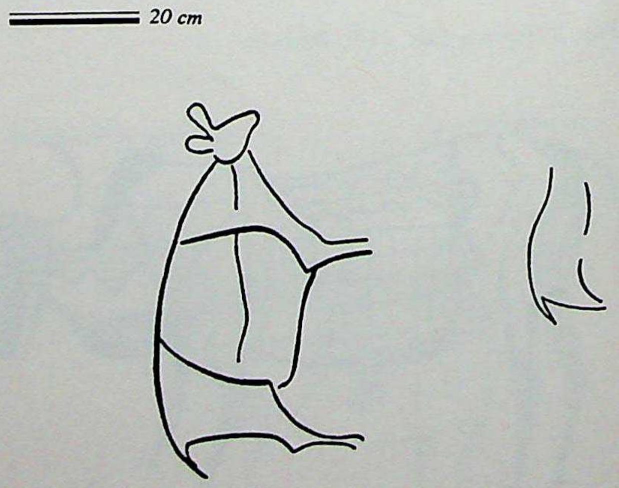


*Fig.:**315**: Marayoor*

*Fig.:**316**: Badami*

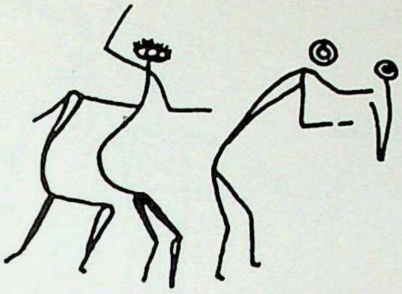


*Fig.:**317**: Badami*

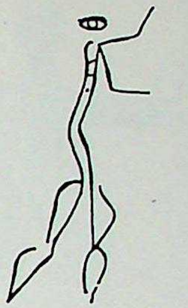
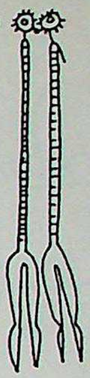


*Fig.:**318**: Badami*



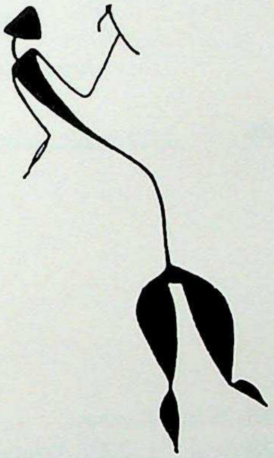


*Fig.:**319**: Badami*

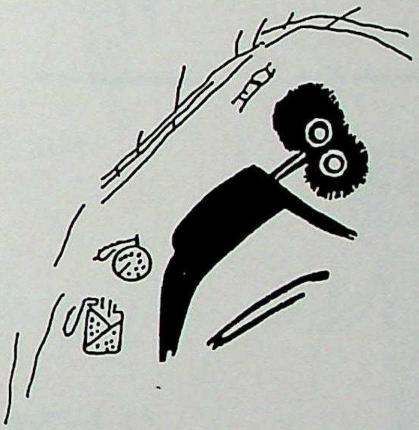

10 cm

*Fig.:**320**: Badami*

20 cm
10 cm

*Fig.:**322**: Badami-Hiregudda*

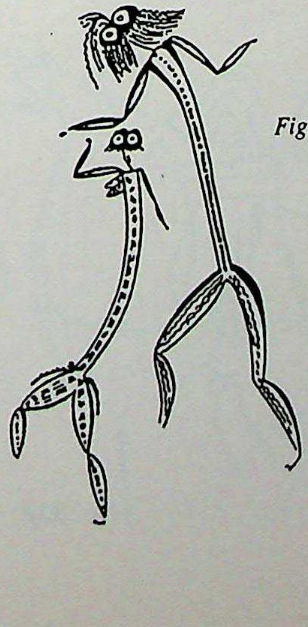
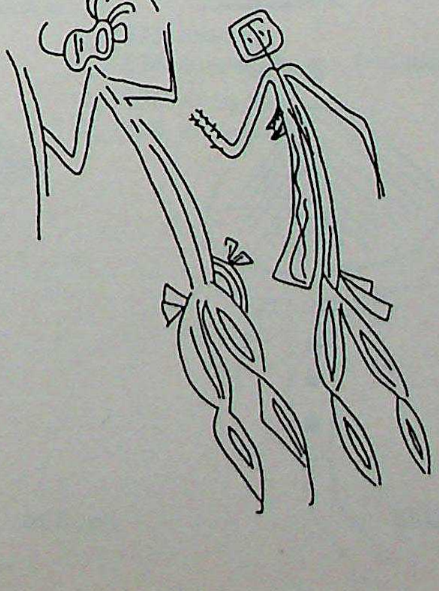


*Fig.:**321**: Badami*



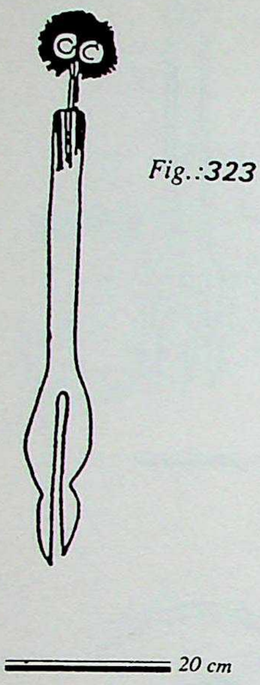


Fig.:**323**

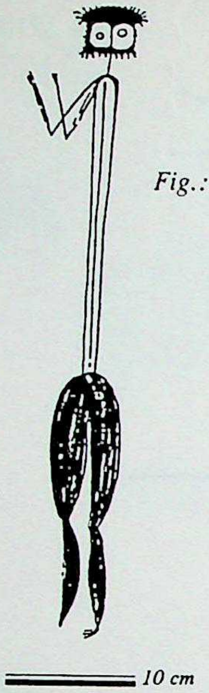


Fig.:**324**

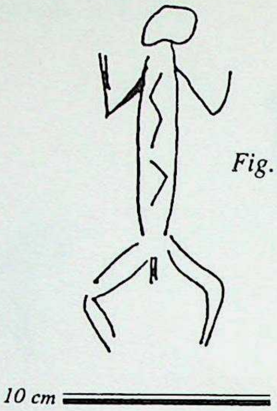


Fig.:**325**

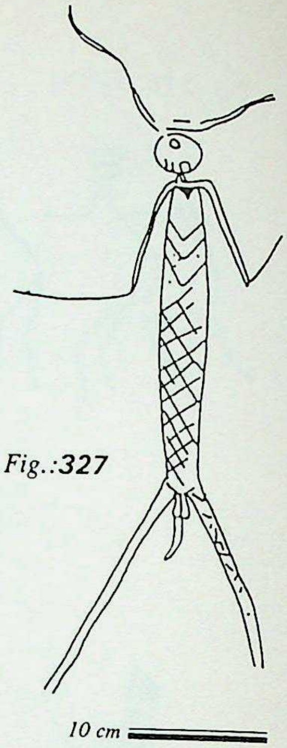


Fig.:**327**

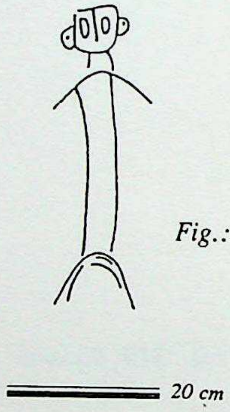


Fig.:**326**

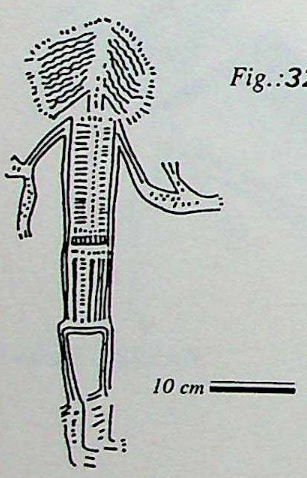


Fig.:**328**

*Fig.:**323**(from Fig.:269): Badami*
*Fig.:**324**: Badami*
*Fig.:**325**(from Fig.:272): Badami*
*Fig.:**326**(from Fig.:273): Badami*
*Fig.:**327**(from Fig.:272): Badami*

*Fig.:**328**: Velary Kombay*
*Fig.:**329**(from Fig.:270): Velary Kombay*
*Fig.:**330**(from Fig.:270): Velary Kombay*
*Fig.:**331**(from Fig.:270): Velary Kombay*
*Fig.:**332**: Velary Kombay*

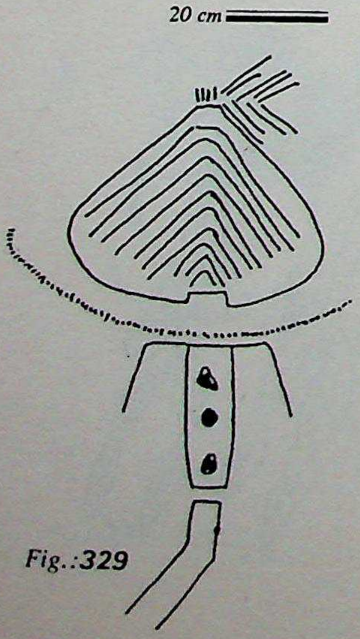


Fig.:**329**

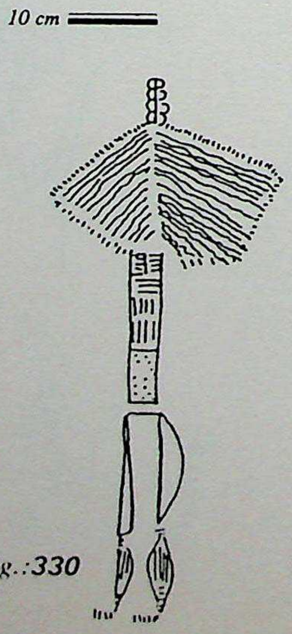


Fig.:**330**

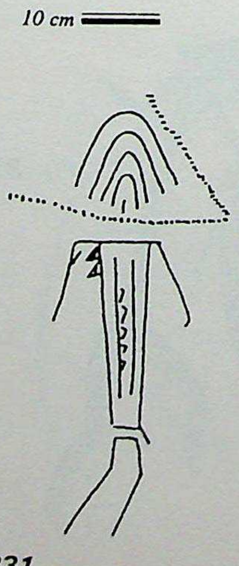


Fig.:**331**

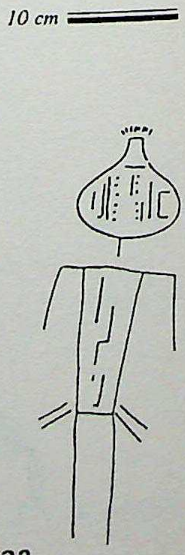


Fig.:**332**

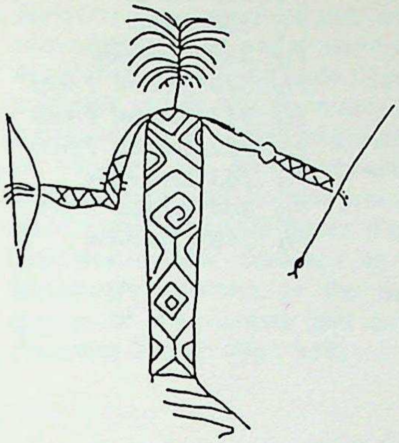


Fig.:333

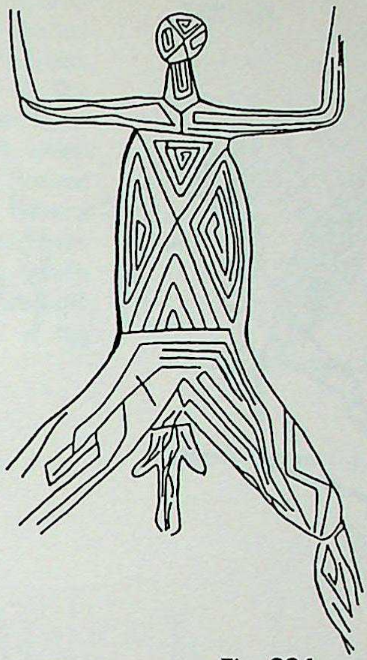


Fig.:334

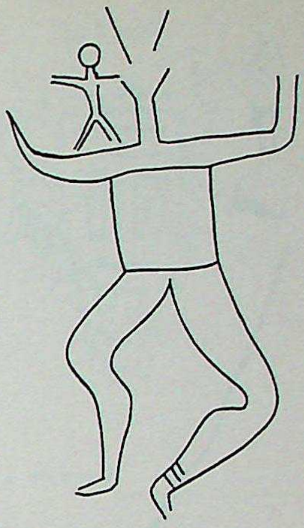


Fig.:335

Fig.:336

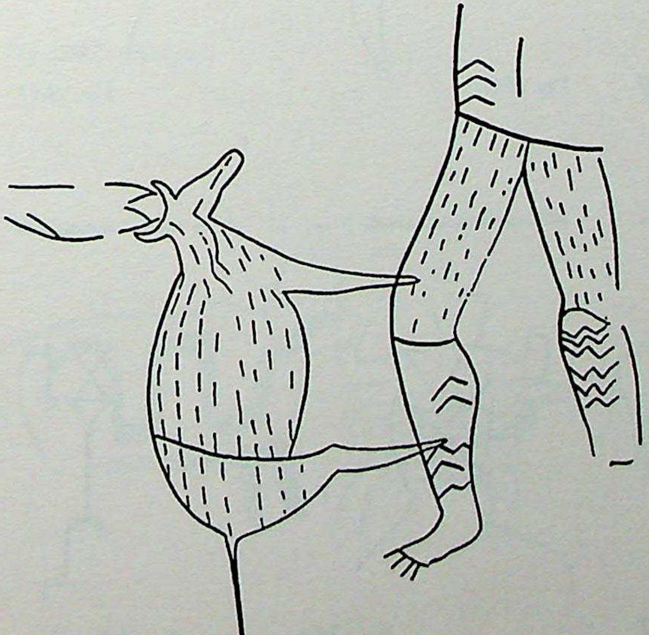


*Fig.:**333**: Badami*
*Fig.:**334**: Benakal Forest- Mallapur*
*Fig.:**335**: Korugodu*
*Fig.:**336**: Korugodu*

*Fig.:***337**

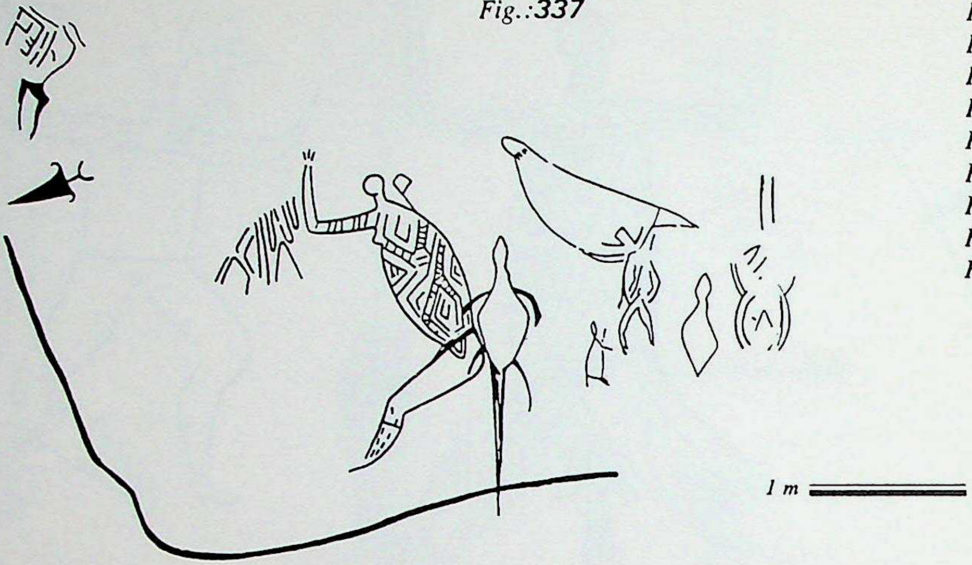


*Fig.:***337***: Hampi*
*Fig.:***338***: Hampi*
*Fig.:***339***: Korugodu*
*Fig.:***340***: Benakal Forest*
*Fig.:***341***: Benakal Forest*
*Fig.:***342***: Benakal Forest*
*Fig.:***343***: Ketavaram*
*Fig.:***344***: Benakal Forest*
*Fig.:***345***: Ketavaram*

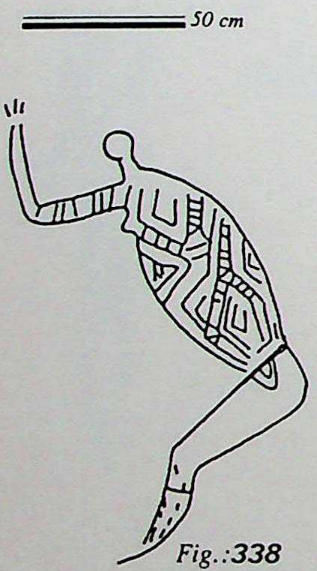


*Fig.:***338**

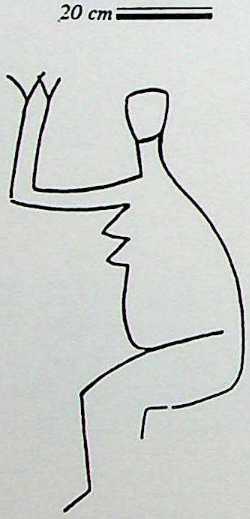


*Fig.:***339**

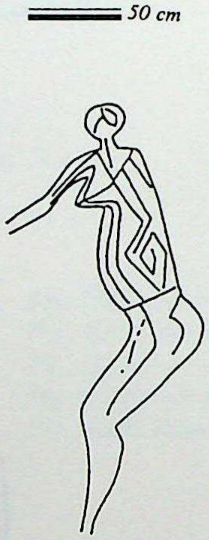


*Fig.:***340**

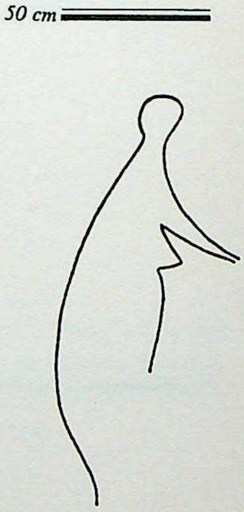


*Fig.:***341**

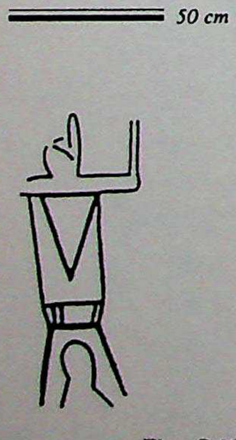


*Fig.:***342**

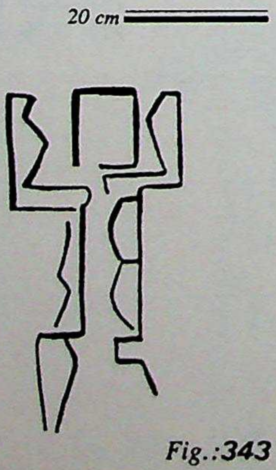


*Fig.:***343**

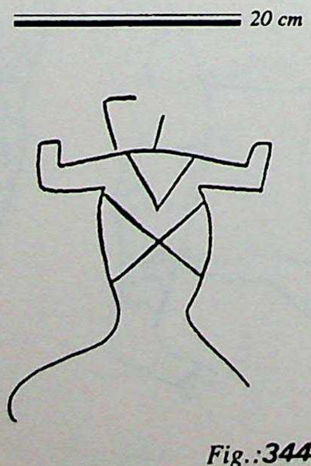


*Fig.:***344**

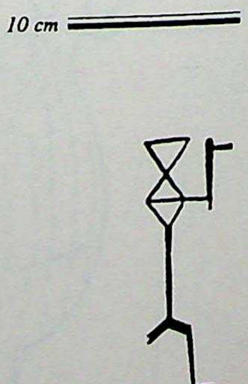


*Fig.:***345**

Another interesting and unique anthropomorph depiction is a mask-like figure in a large painted composition at the site of Alampadi in the South Arcot District of Tamil Nadu (Figs.: 346-7). The paintings at this site are mainly confined to an approximately 6 metres long shelter wall, which is covered by white drawings of mixed anthropomorph and zoomorph character. Several figures also resemble plants (Fig.:347). These paintings overlay drawings of bovids, which stylistically conform to the earliest stylistic groups of the hunters and gatherers in the Southern Deccan (Fig.: 348).

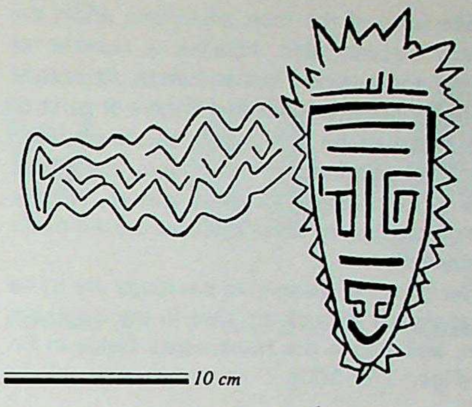


*Fig.:**346**(from Fig.:347): Alampadi*

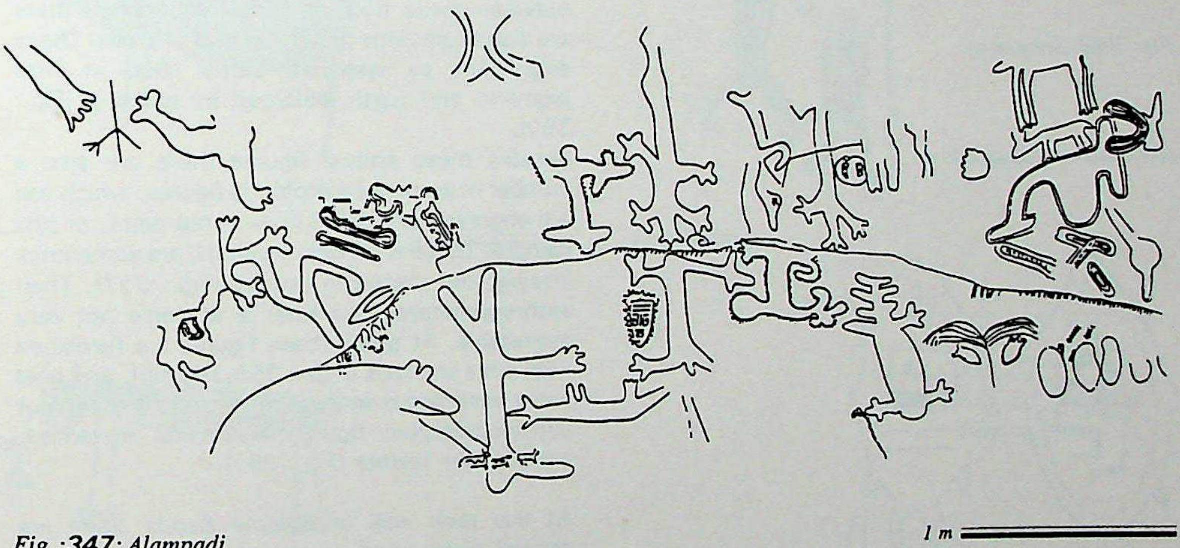


*Fig.:**347**: Alampadi*

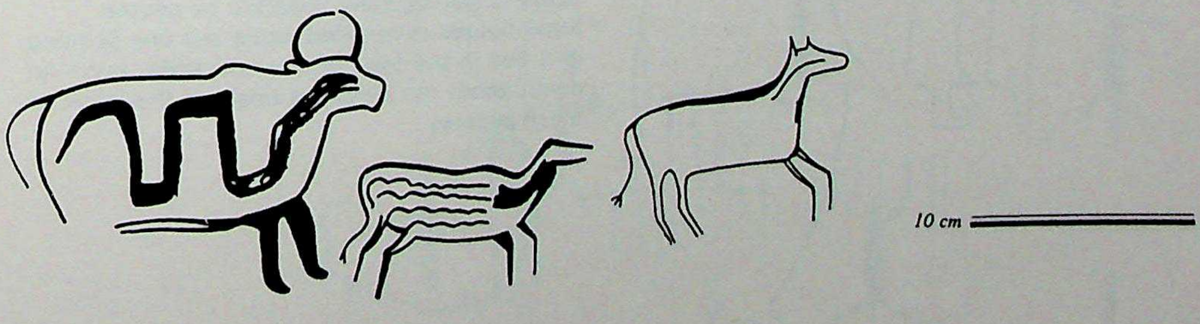
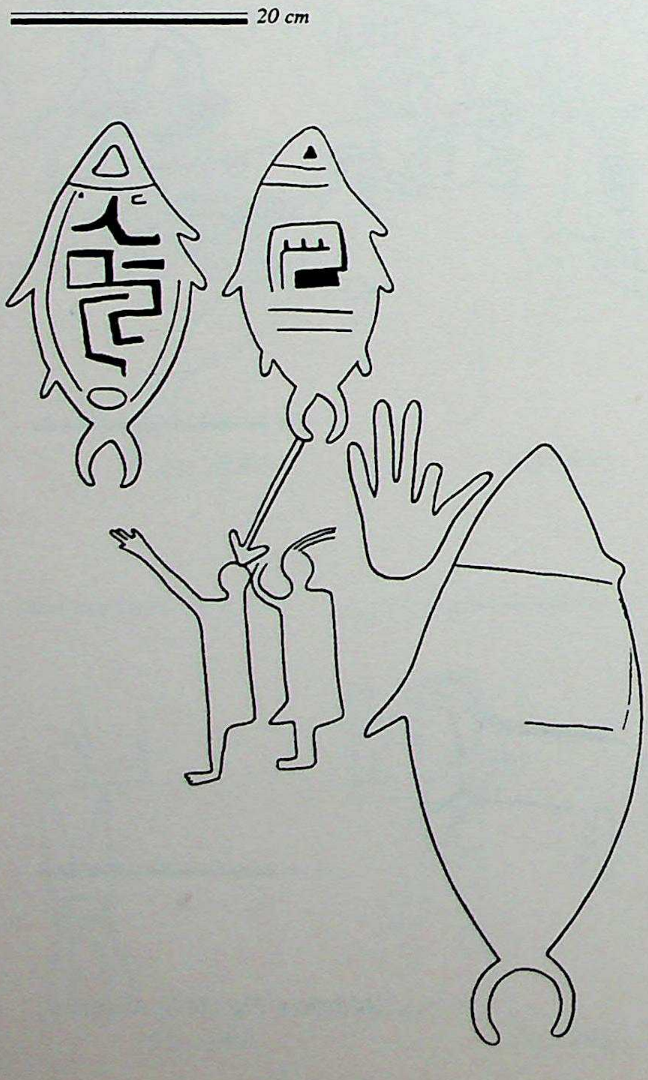


*Fig.:**348**(from Fig.:347): Alampadi*

The repertoire of the later mesolithic art in the Southern Deccan also includes a number of stencilled and outlined human hands. At several of these handprints, individual fingers or parts of fingers seem to be missing or mutilated (Fig.: 349). The paintings of the later mesolithic groups do not convey narrative scenes, but the groupings of many of these pictures are definitely not incidental.

This later group of mesolithic paintings are to be found at almost all rock-art sites in the Southern Deccan, and also in the Henanegala Galge in Sri Lanka (Figs.: 298-300).

*Fig.:**349**: Settavaray*



Besides these paintings, there exist a number of pictures at many sites in the Southern Deccan, which cannot --stylistically or otherwise-- be compared with other pictures. The highly abstract nature of these pictures also does not facilitate a thematic or technological analysis.

One of the most important of these rock-art sites was found in the Lankapalli Reserve Forest in the Kammam District of Andhra Pradesh (Figs.: 26-30,350-60). At a quartzite rock wall at Bainete Banda are several dozens of finely engraved hoof and paw impressions, partly filled in with red pigment.

Most common are impressions of bovine-hoofs and those of cervids (Figs.: 353-5). Paw-prints of carnivores seem to belong mostly to leopards (Fig.: 26). Within the large number of engraved animal footprints there are also several examples of engraved human feet of different sizes. In between these hoof and paw engravings there are also engravings of herbivorous animals. These engravings as well are partly filled in with pigment, and partly enlarged by painting (Fig.: 350).

Besides these animal figures there are also a number of anthropomorphic(?) figures, which too are engraved and filled in with red paint, or just painted. These anthropomorphs(?) are sometimes arrayed and placed in groups (Fig.: 357). Their anthropomorphic character is at times not very expressive. At times these figures are furnished with arms and legs (Figs.: 356,359-60), and hold some implements in their hands. Another type of anthropomorphic figure, in several instances, overlays the former (Fig.: 357).

At this rock wall of Bainete Banda there are several successive layers of paintings, clearly belonging to different periods. Several large paintings show trees with honeycombs hanging from their branches (Fig.: 358). It should be mentioned that at the Bainete Banda cliff several spots are haunted by colonies of bees, whose honey is still regularly collected by people.

Small figures of humped cattle and one painting of a lion in the best of classical style, leave no doubt about the historical origin of the latest of these pictures.

Fig.:350

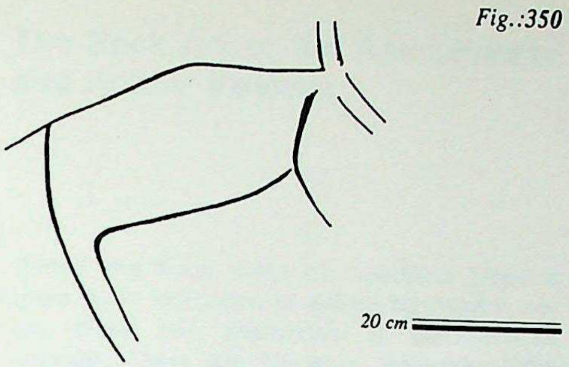


Fig.:353

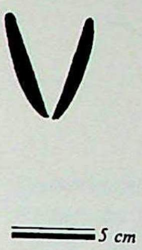


Fig.:354

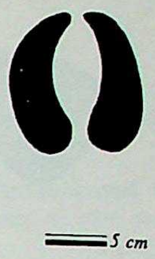


Fig.:355

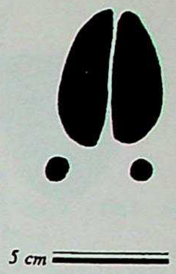


Fig.:351

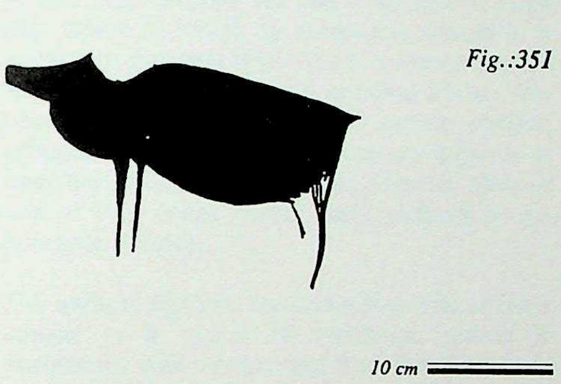
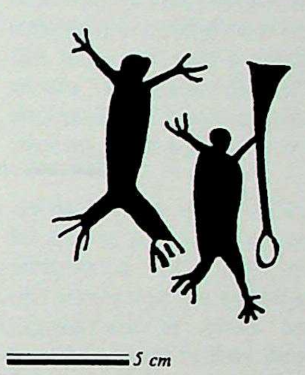


Fig.:356



Figs.:350,351,352,353,
354,355,356,357,
Bainete Banda

Fig.:352

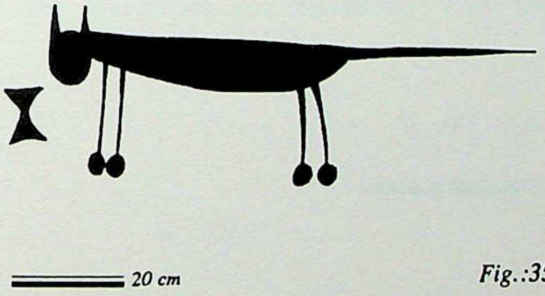
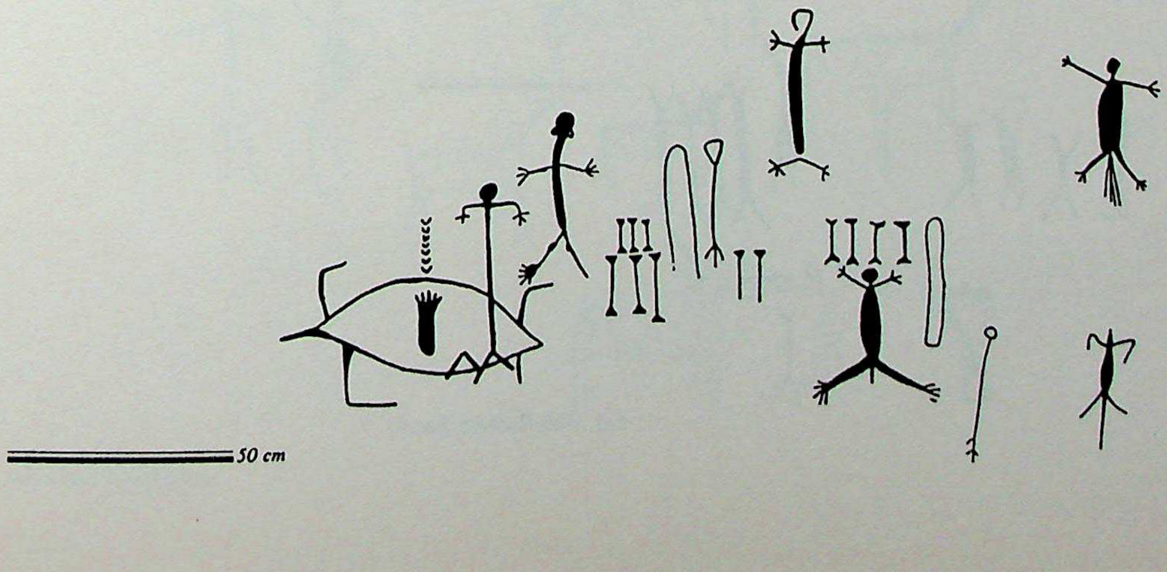


Fig.:357



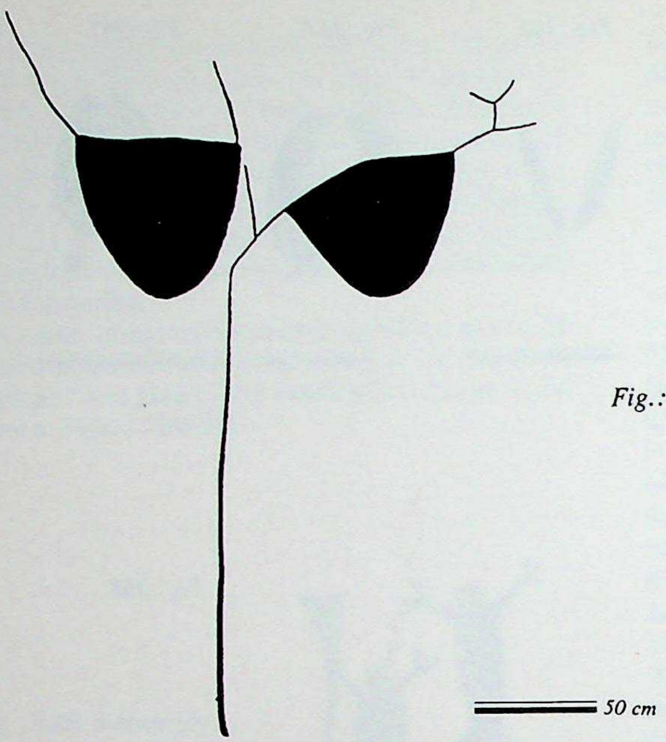
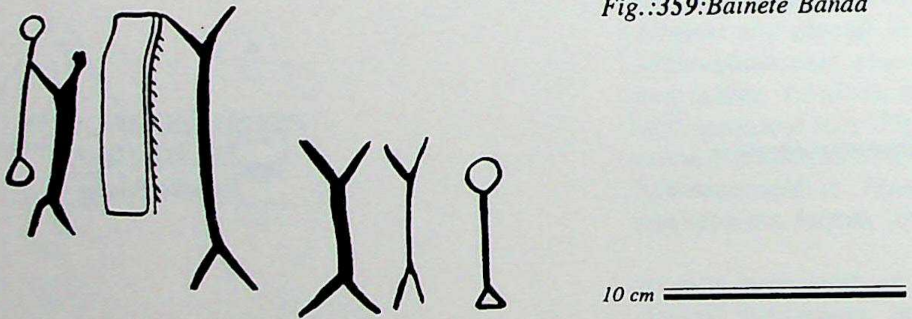


Fig.:358:Bainete Banda

Fig.:359:Bainete Banda



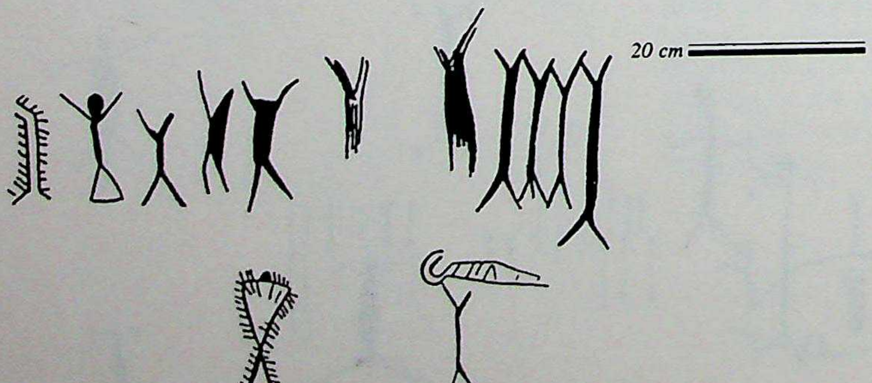


Fig.:360:Bainete Banda

The Rock Art of the Agriculturists and Animal-Keepers

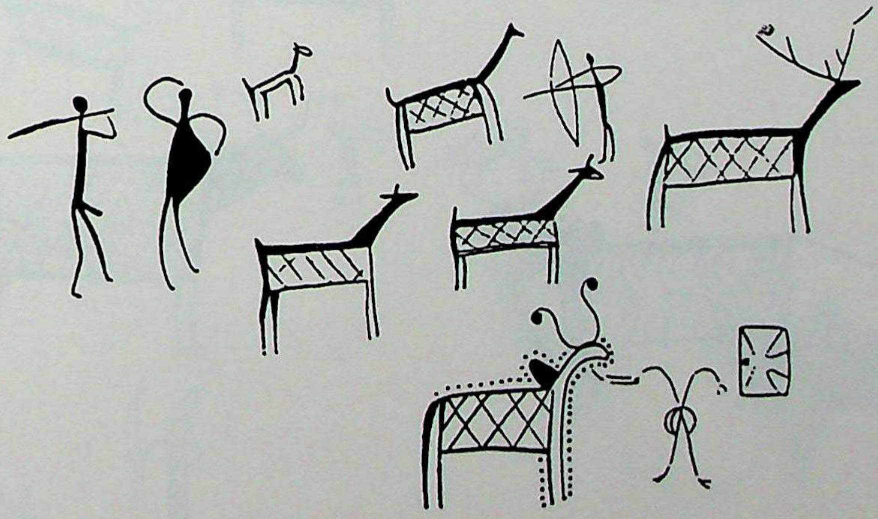
Within the huge mass of mesolithic pictures there is no indication of animal husbandry, nor are there any depictions of domesticated animals. There are however, isolated picture scenes, where people are shown in a non-antagonistic relation towards animals.

In one such picture we see a somewhat large pig, which is fed(?) by diminutive people in a constructed shelter (Fig.: 151). A woman is seen kneeling and working at a grinding stone. This painting belongs to one of the earliest stylistic groups in the Vindhyas. Dogs as companions of man are absent in mesolithic pictures, save in one or two cases in the early pictures in the Mirzapur District.

The earliest pictures featuring domestic animals appear in a group of paintings, which is stylistically well demarcated from the pictures of the hunters and gatherers in the same region. Although the theme of these pictures centres to a large extent around hunting and gathering, new innovations and technologies make their appearance. Domesticated humped cattle are frequently shown, as also the dog.
Cattle, with long lyre-shaped horns and a prominent hump at their back become the thematic centre of these pictures. Steer with decorated horns (Figs.: 361-8) are shown roped to "mangers" (Fig.: 361), ridden (Figs.: 362,415,434-8) and surrounded by dancers and jesters(?) or bullfighters(?) (Figs.: 363,376,401). But there are also a number of picture groups, where domesticated (?) bulls are shown encircled by hunters, who aim and discharge their microlith-barbed arrows at them (Fig.: 387).

Cattle are the socio-cultural centre of the rock-art of this period. The style and content of the pictures is very uniform all over India. This uniformity and the stereotype treatment of cattle figures are at times so pronounced --even between such widely separated regions as the Southern Deccan and the sites in Central India-- that direct contacts between these cultures have to be considered.

Fig.:361:Kharwai



20 cm

Fig.:362:Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla

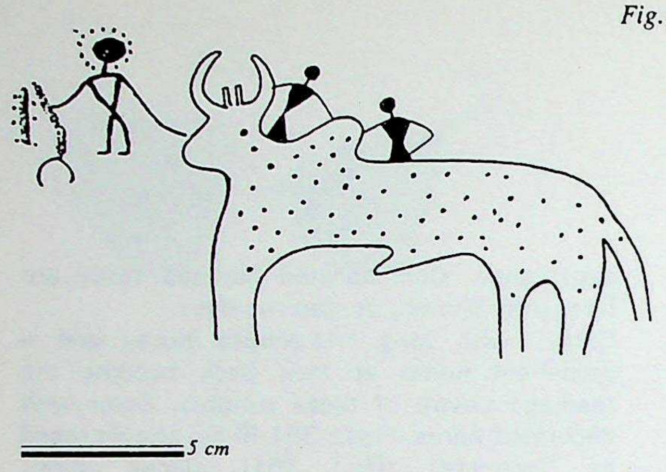


Fig.:364:Narsinghgarh- Khakshila

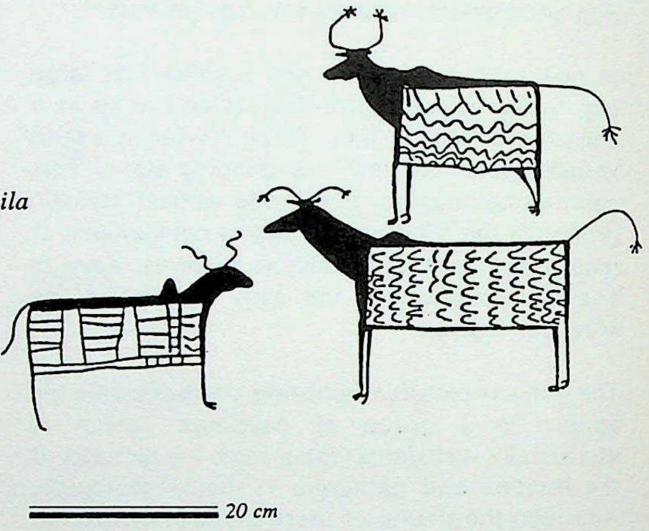


Fig.:363:Narsinghgarh- Khakshila

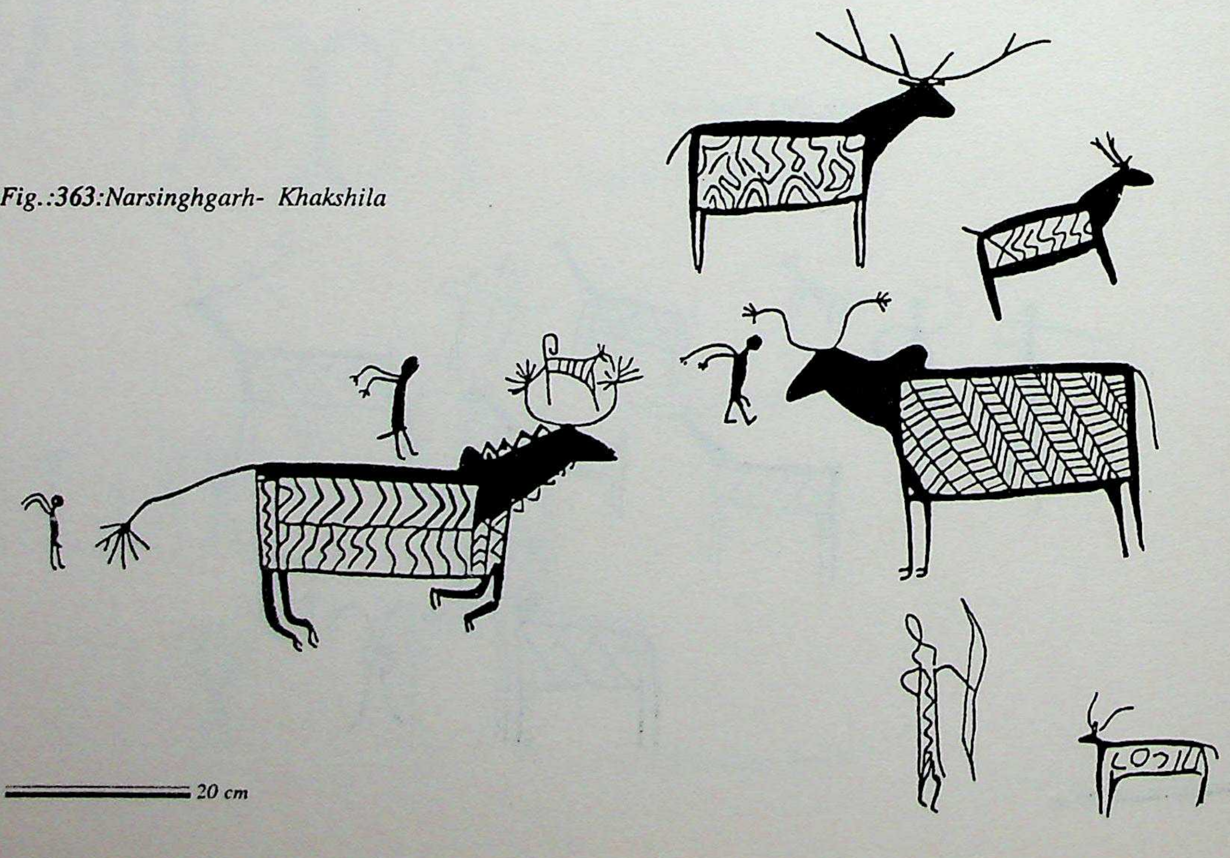


Fig.:365

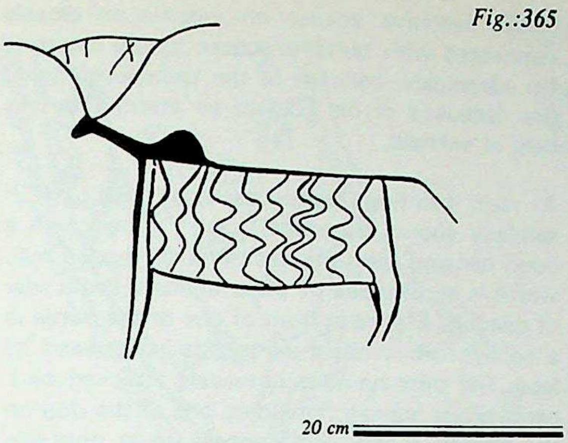


Fig.:366

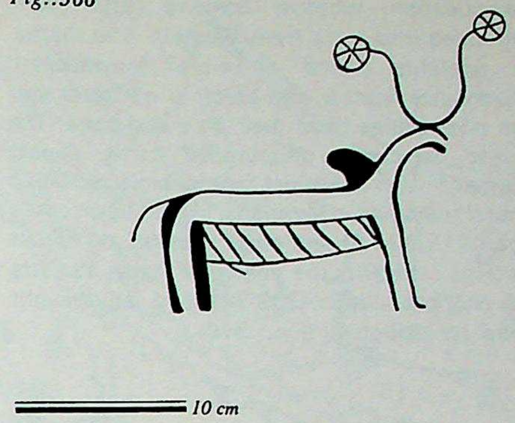


Fig.:367

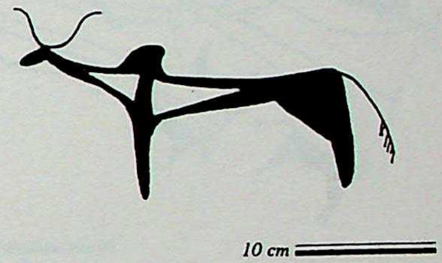


Fig.:365:Narsinghgarh- Khakshila
Fig.:366:Kharwai
Fig.:367:Jaora
Fig.:368:Modi
Fig.:369:Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla

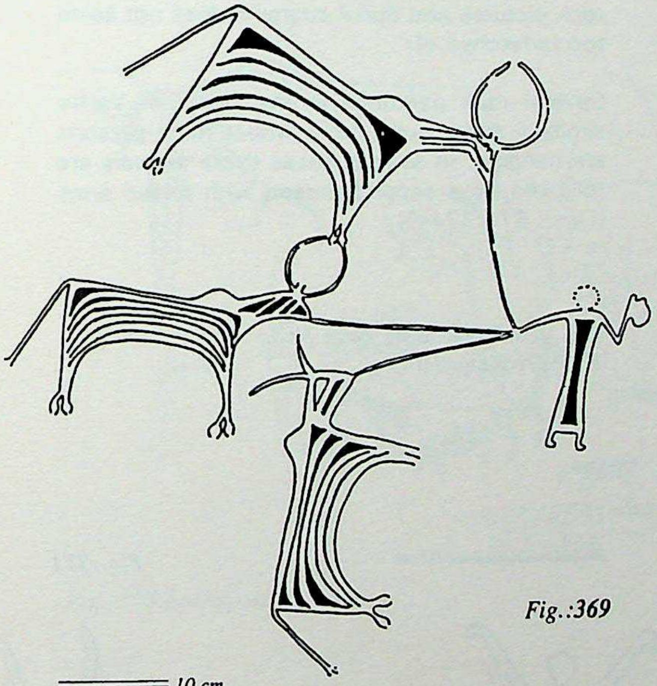
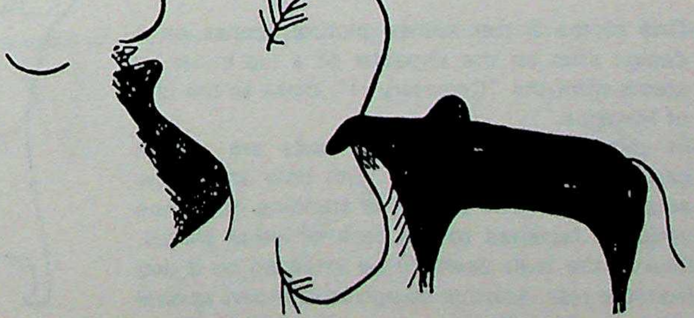


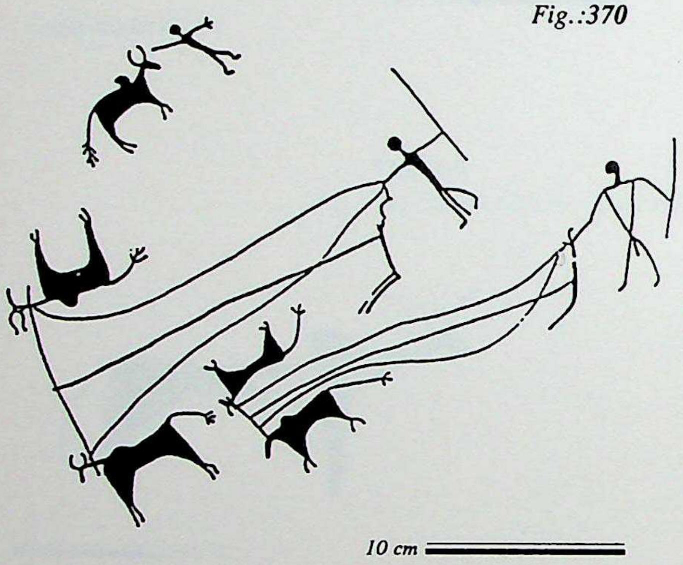
Fig.:369

Fig.:368



The question, whether humped cattle were introduced into India from Western Asia during the neolithic period or were domesticated indigenously from a wild stock is not clear yet; both possibilities have their pros and cons. The earliest depictions of humped cattle appear together with distinct neolithic/chalcolithic cultural traits and innovations, like riding on cattle (Figs.: 415,434-8) and most probably on horses too (Figs.: 440-4), the yoking of cattle to carts and chariots (Figs.: 308-30) and as draught animal for ploughing (Fig.: 370).

Fig.:370



Domesticated and wild animals, as well as fish, birds and plants are typical elements known from early West Asian neolithic and chalcolithic pottery designs. Similarly, pottery from early chalcolithic cultures in the general area of the Harappan region in western India excel in animal designs.

That depiction of bulls are an ideological abstract is clear from the many prominent pictures on seals and sealings, on pottery and from the many bull statuettes which were found wherever archaeological strata of that period were touched.

One of the better known picture scenes on a design strip on the shoulder of a big burial jar stems from the "Cemetery H", close to the city of Harappa.

In this picture (Fig.: 372) bulls are shown carrying a person armed with bow and arrow across water. The person is standing on a rope which is fastened to the neck of either animal. One of the bulls seem to be attacked by a dog from the rear. Another design strip shows several peacocks(?) in flight carrying a person.

These narrative scenes on vessels so closely connected with burial practices surely illustrate the ideological concept of the transportation of the deceased or his soul to an afterlife by the help of animals.

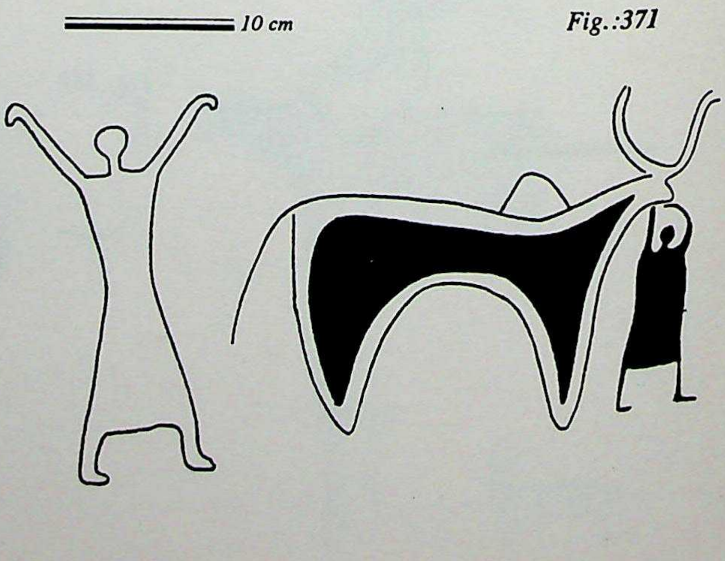
A rock painting from Lakhajoar (Fig.: 373) similarly shows a horned(?) man armed with a bow, hanging from the neck of a six-legged bull, which is surrounded by other animals and a row of dancers. Placed in front of one of the cattle is a honeycomb, while a pig stands in between its legs. The third bovid is obviously attacked by a carnivorous animal, reminding one of the dog on the Harappan urn. The dancers spurt horn-like flourishes from their heads. In between the dancers are placed swastika-like symbols.

To me the thematic analogies between this painting from Lakhajoar and the pictures on the big urns from "Cemetery H" from Harappa seem quite close, and since a chalcolithic burial was found in one of the caves of Bhimbetka during an excavation, the connection between some of the rock pictures and burial customs does not seem too farfetched.(4)

Several rock paintings in the Chambal Valley similarly show bulls, from whose neck persons are hanging. In several cases these animals are followed by a second person with raised arms (Figs.: 371,374-5).

Fig.:370:Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla
Fig.:371:Kanjadei

Fig.:371



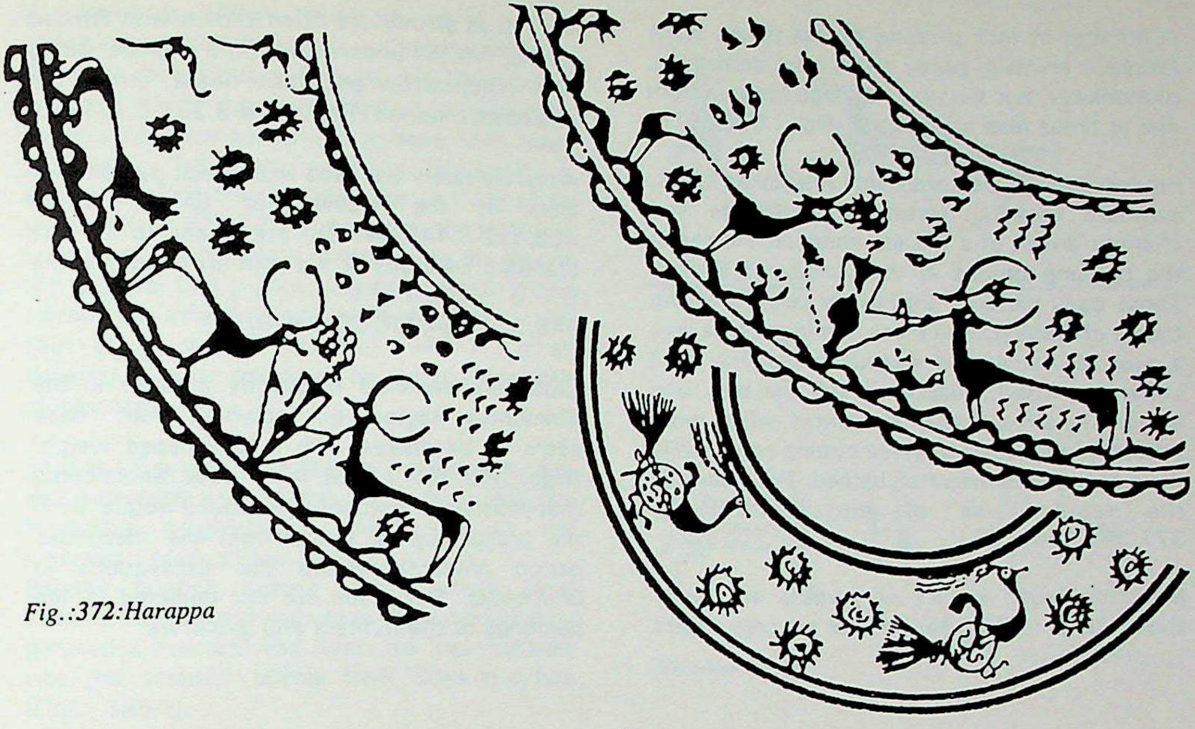


Fig.:372:Harappa

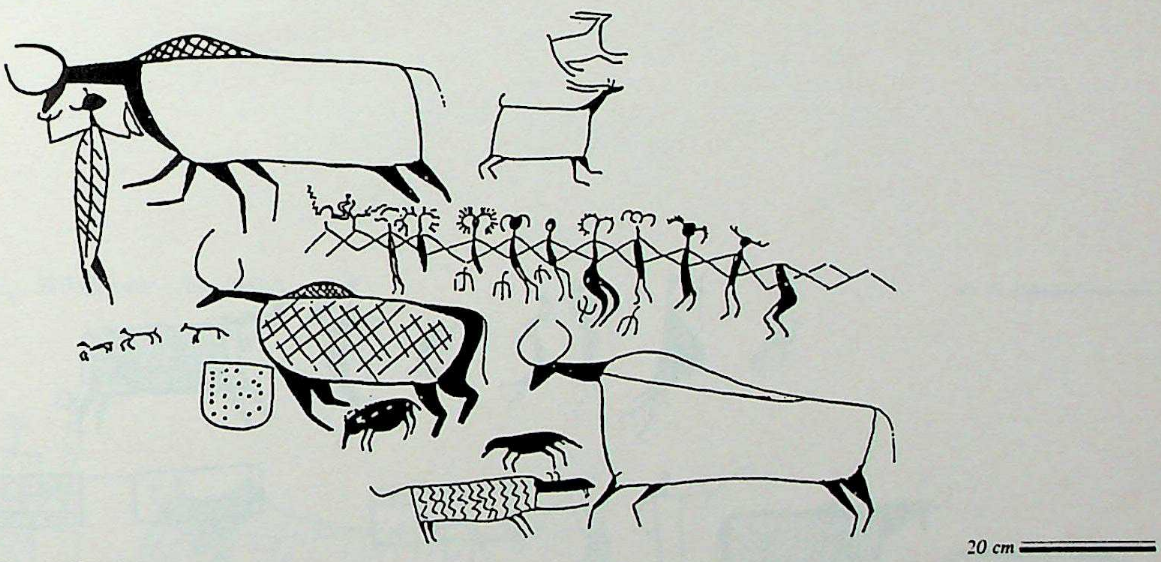
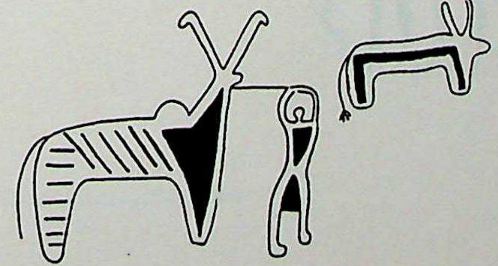


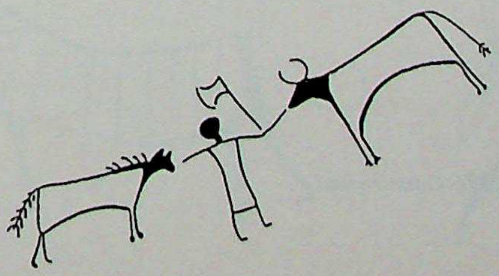
Fig.:373:Lakhajoar

Fig.:374:Kanjadei



20 cm

Fig.:375:Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla



A number of rock pictures of this period show fabulous animals, partly resembling carnivores, or monkeys, but always with large fangs in front and at times also at the back (Figs.: 376,391).

Processions of persons with interlinked arms, acrobats, boxers, wrestlers, musicians and chariots driven in a file are common themes in the painting groups in the vicinity of Bhopal. These early pictures are heavily centred on the theme of hunting. And these hunting scenes give a good idea about the weapons used. The most commonly used weapon is still the bow and arrow. The arrows are often blunted, which most probably indicates a traverse cutting edge, while the arrow-shafts are often barbed. This points to the regular use of microliths (Figs.: 377,383,386-8,391).

Microlith-barbed spears or javelins are rarely shown (Figs.: 377,386). In later pictures spears as well as arrows are often shown with flanged points, which I understand came into use, along with metal arrow and spear-heads, during the chalcolithic period (Figs.: 378-9,381-5,421-5).

Axes are rarely depicted in the rock paintings at sites in the vicinity of Bhopal (Figs.: 406,422-3,445,447-9), but seem to be the standard weapons at the rock-art regions in the Chambal Valley (Figs.: 349,389,404,418-20,438-9).

Clubs are depicted frequently at sites in the Bhimbetka Region, but nowhere else. These seem to be stakes with a ball-shaped weight (Figs.: 376,391-2,645). It should be remembered that polished ringstones were found frequently in the archaeological strata from the mesolithic period onwards during the excavations in Bhimbetka. But clubs are not depicted in the paintings of the hunters and gatherers.

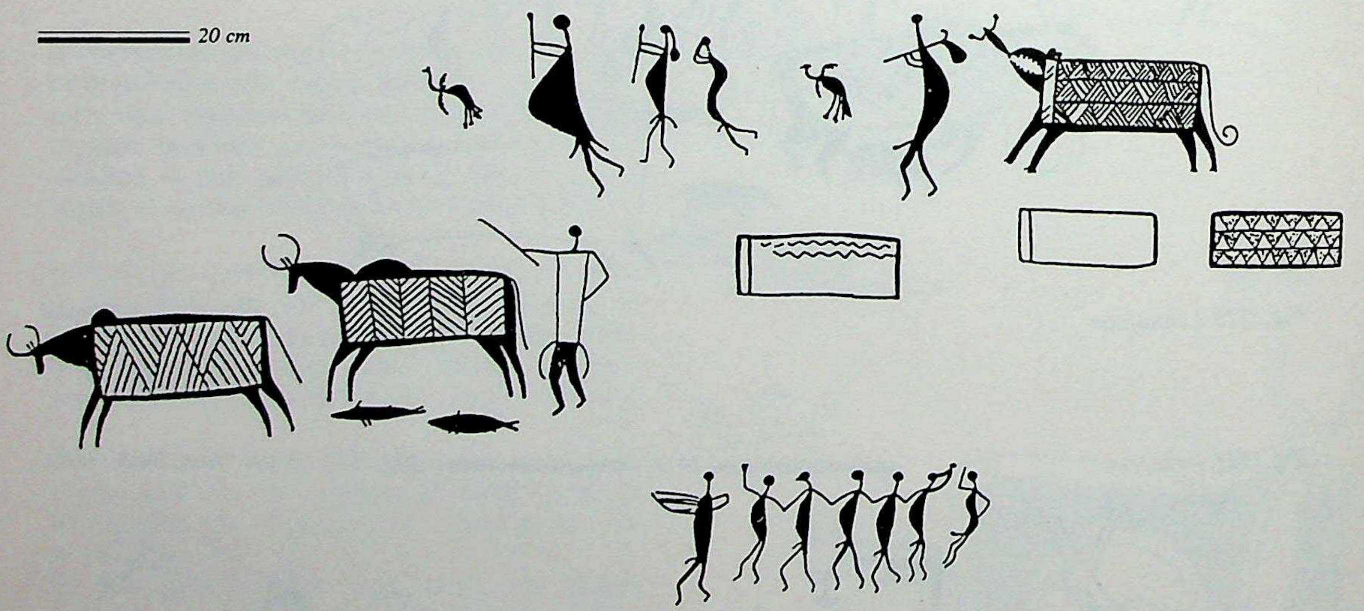


Fig.:376:Ganeshghati

If hunting is shown frequently as a social undertaking in the mesolithic art and the singular hunter is rather the exception, this situation is reversed during the chalcolithic period. Solitary hunters now encounter the animals with bow and arrow. Often the arrow or the spear is already sticking through the neck or body of an animal (Figs.: 378-85). Quite often, the hunter is seen as driving his spear or arrow into the rear of the animals. One author wanted to see in these stereotypes a fertility cult, as "fertilization by the shot of an arrow" (Wanke,L., 1977). It all depends how far one dares on the slippery path of speculation.

Scenes of several cooperating hunters are rare, and wherever such scenes exist, they lack the "technical pragmatism" which give to the mesolithic scenes their narrative quality.
Several hunting scenes exist, where large animals, buffaloes or elephants are surrounded by diminutive hunters who discharge their missiles into the animals' bodies from close quarters (Figs.: 386-7).

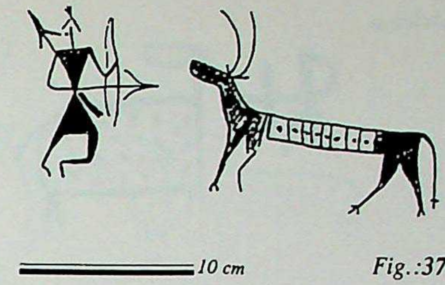


Fig.:378:Kharwai

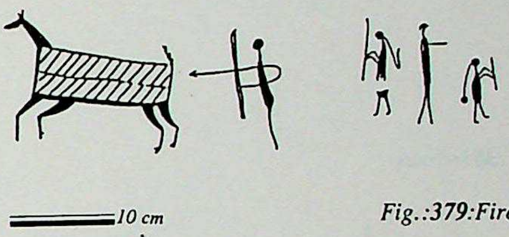


Fig.:379:Firengi

Fig.:377:Raisen - Ramchaja

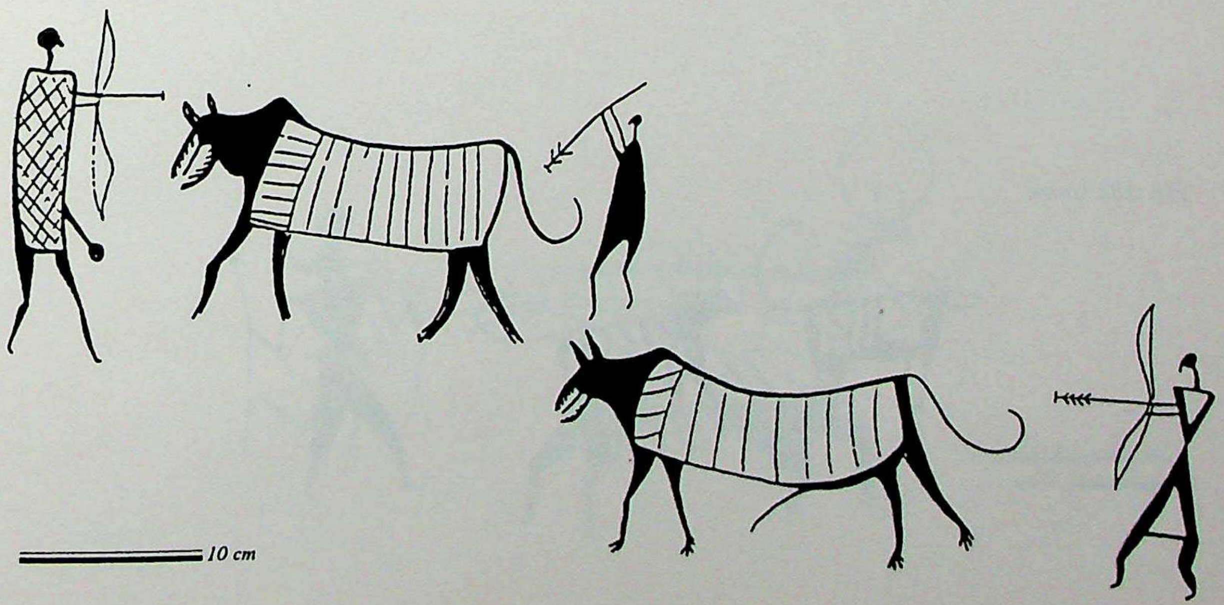


Fig.:380:Abchand

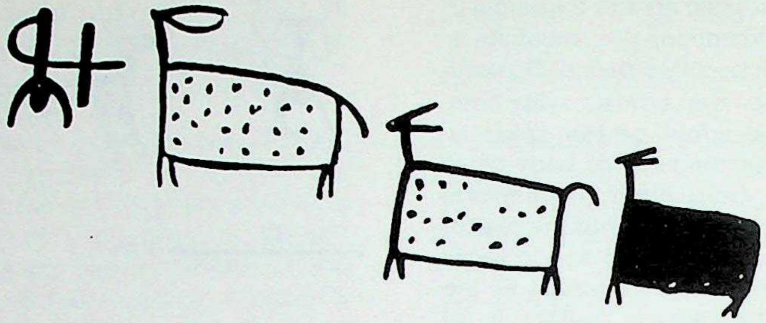


Fig.:381:Urden

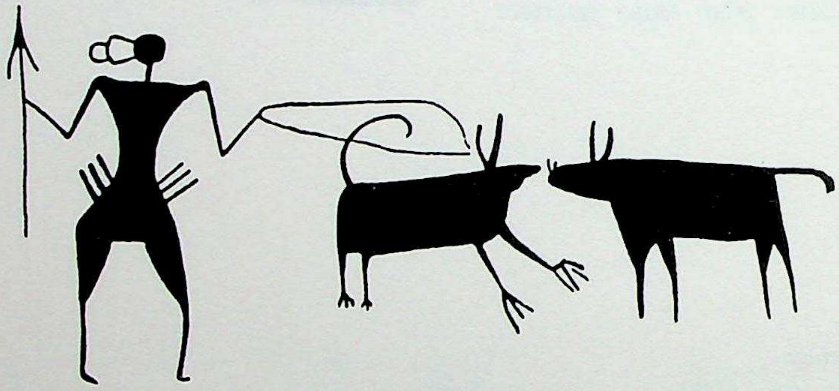
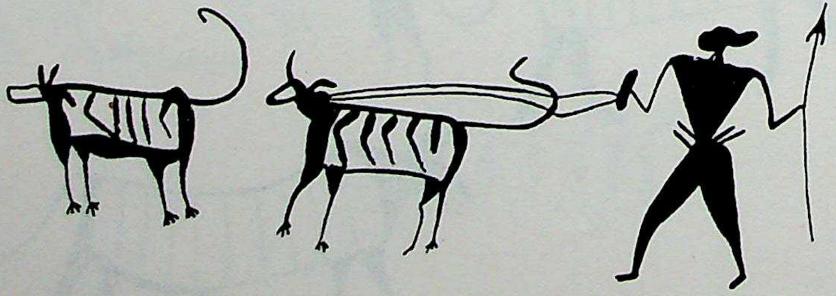


Fig.:382:Urden



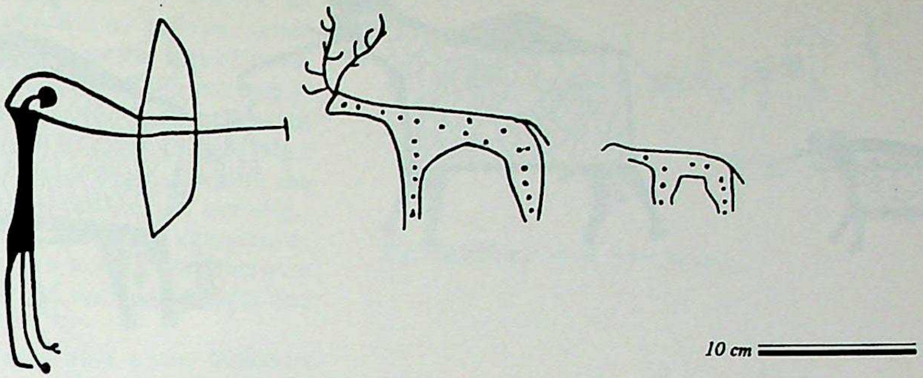


Fig.:383:Firengi

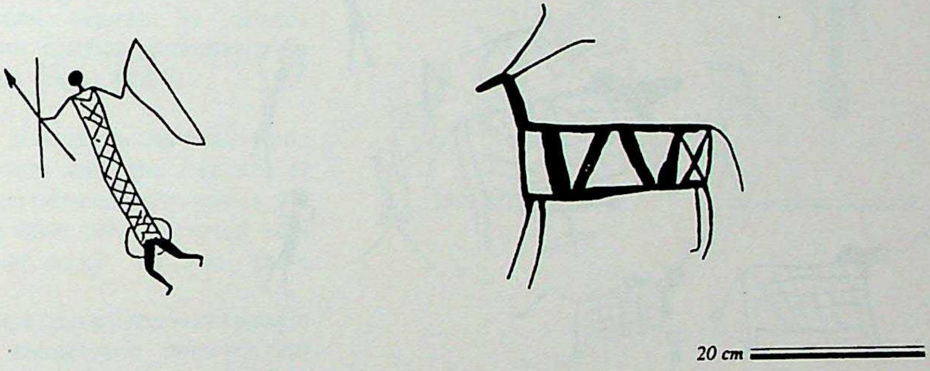


Fig.:384:Firengi

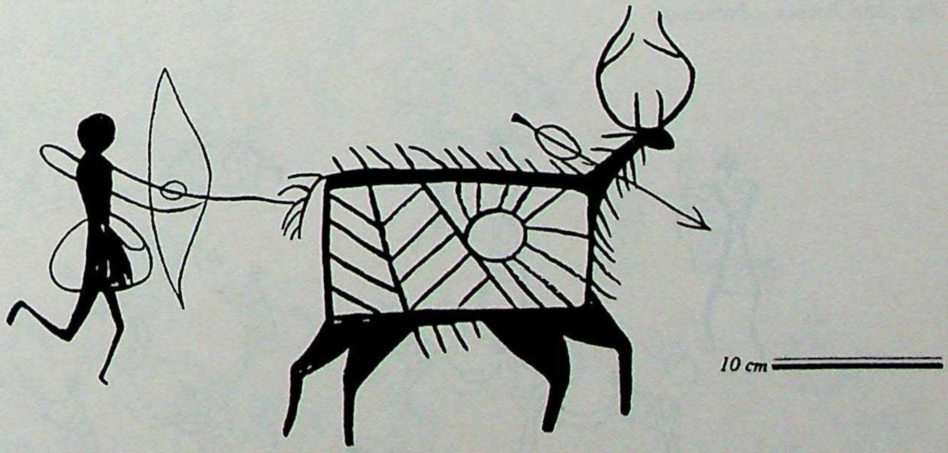


Fig.:385:Lakhajoar

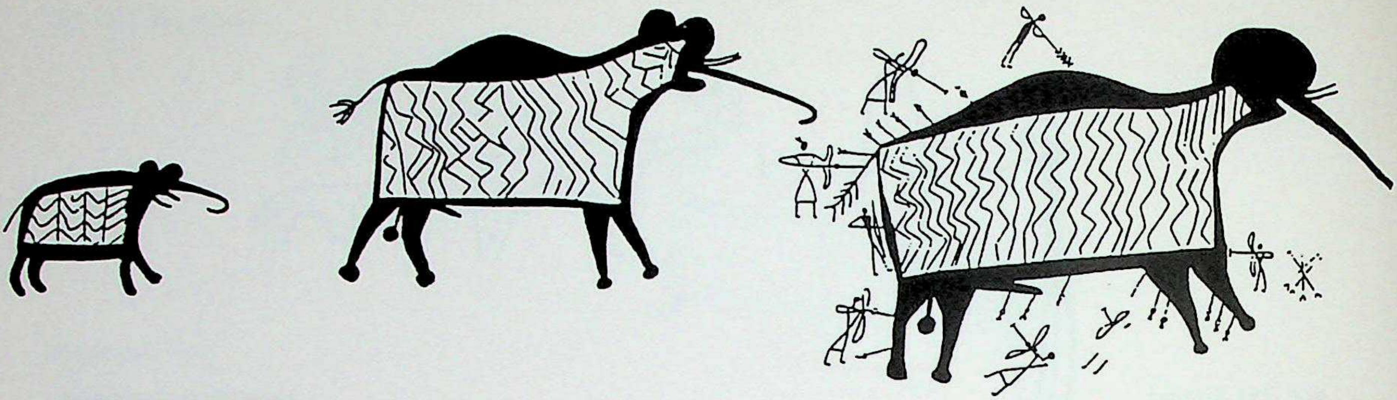


Fig.:386:Urden

20 cm

Fig.:387:Narsinghgarh - Khakshila

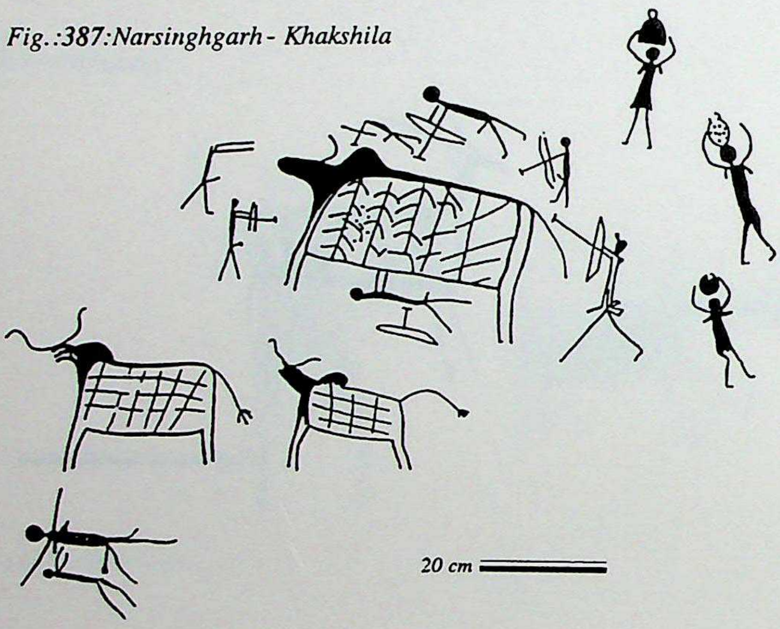
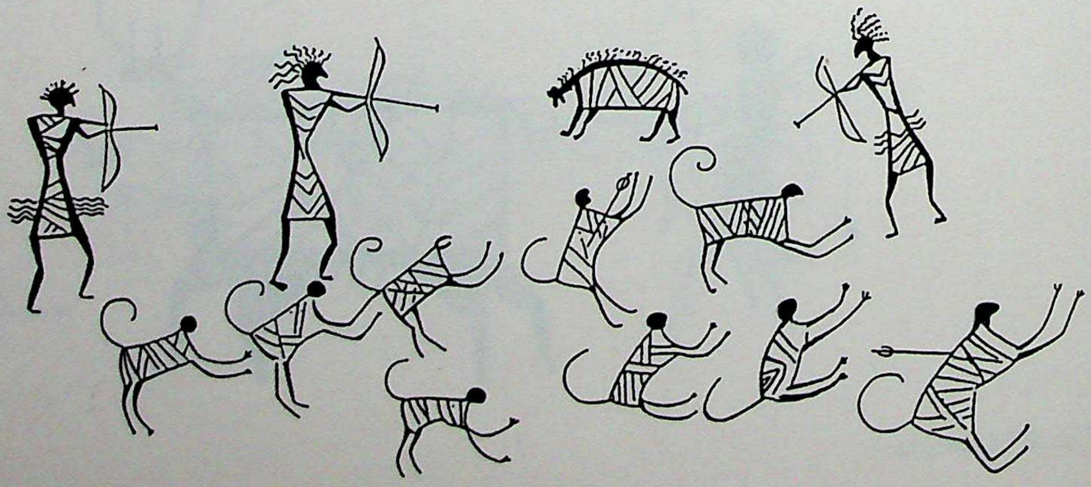


Fig.:388:Raisen - Ramchaja

10 cm



Scenes of stereotyped arrays of animals of different species, confronted by a single hunter aiming his bow and arrow at the first of these animals are very common (Fig.: 545), not only in the chalcolithic paintings in the Vindhya Hills, but also in pictures from the Southern Deccan (Fig.: 483). In the pictures of the Chambal Valley the threatening bow is replaced by an axe (Fig.: 389). The stiffness and the formal character of these picture scenes are one of the invariable conventions in the art of the agriculturists and cattle-keepers.

These procession scenes have a very theatrical air about them, which might be an indication of an actual cultic function or religious background of these pictures, a hypothesis which is strengthened by a procession of deers, arrayed in front of an ithyphallic hero or god (Fig.: 390). Pot-bellied persons seated on four-legged seats and surrounded by the paraphernalia of hierarchic elevation are central figures in chariot processions. Musicians, acrobats and boxers are shown in these scenes (Figs.: 428-9).

The linear organizing principle in the chalcolithic picture groups contrasts with the free use of space in the mesolithic compositions, where the wall space seems to have been accepted as a new "landscape" over which the artist could place his figures.

The chalcolithic pictures occupy the wall space in a very static and stereotyped manner; the unevenness of the wall is not incorporated or accepted as a new element into the composition.

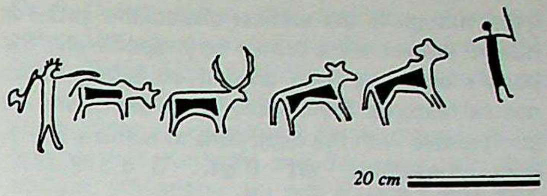


Fig.:389:Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla

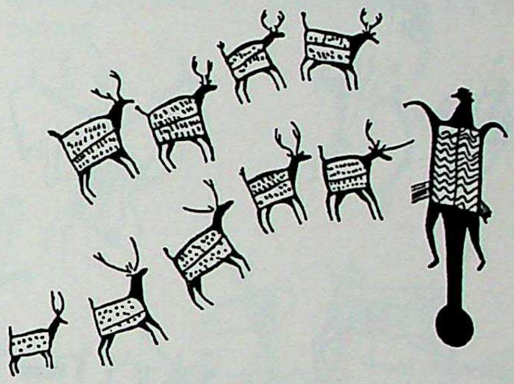
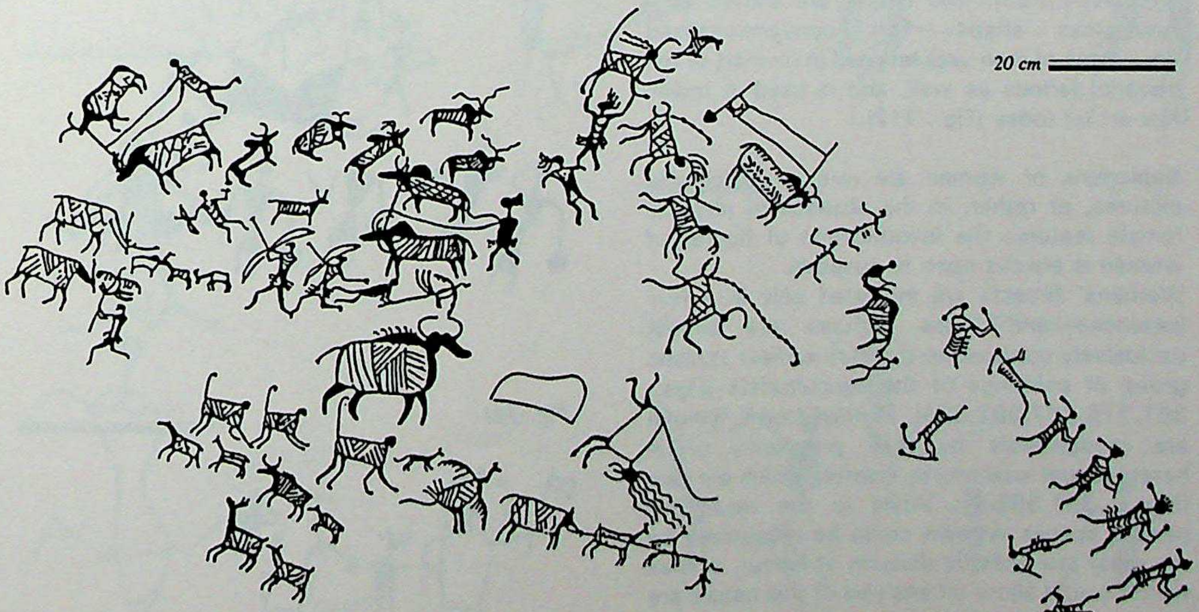


Fig.:390:Satkunda

Fig.:391:Raisen - Ramchaja



Even though in the earliest chalcolithic pictures human figures were drawn very repetitively, the body's structure was divided according to its natural features. Stylistically, these depictions are comparable with the depictions of humans in the later mesolithic art (Figs.: 376,379,387, 399,405-7,644).

Fig.:392:Firengi
Fig.:393:Chibbar Nulla
Fig.:394:Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla

Fig.:392

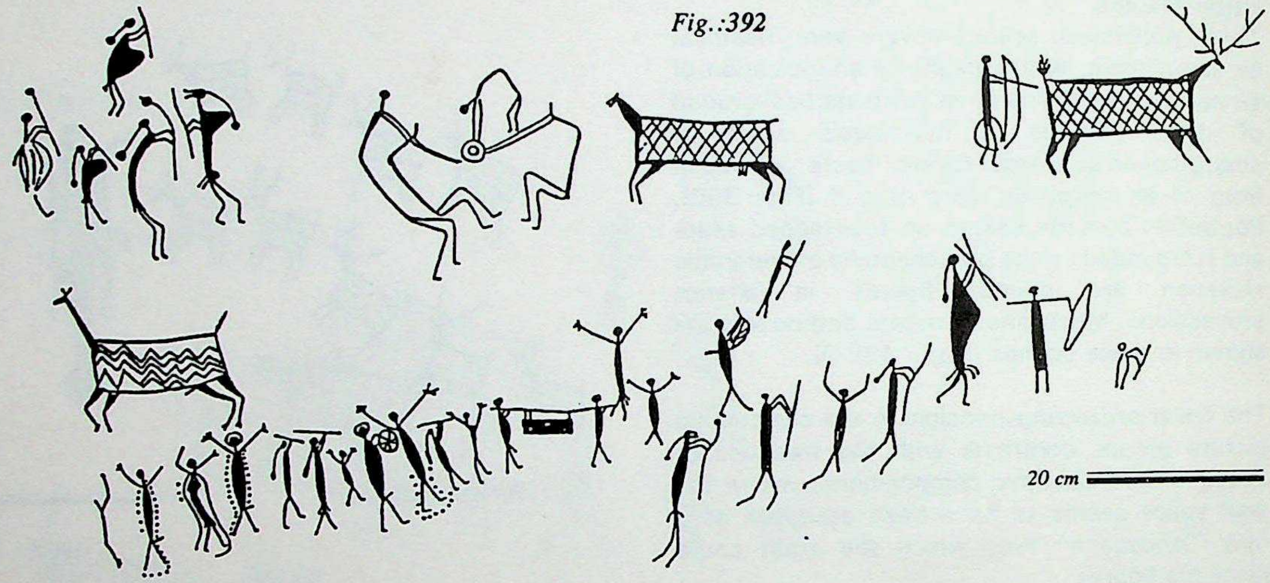
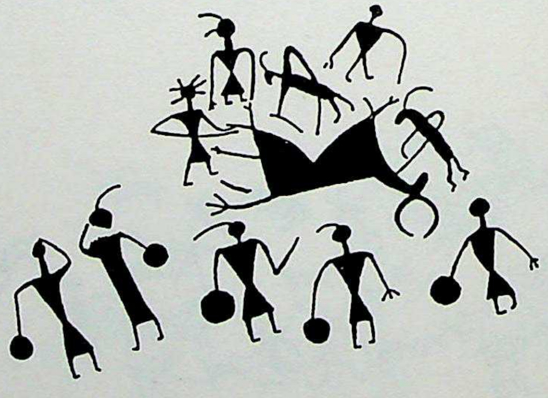


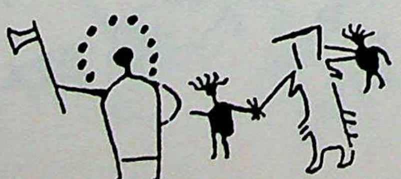
Fig.:393



In the later chalcolithic pictures the human bodies were treated like a symbol (Figs.: 378,381-2,393). The bodies are shown as a hour-glass shape. This conventionalized depictions of men was retained in rock-art of the historic periods as well, and is used in Indian folk-art till today (Fig.: 712).

Depictions of women are rare in chalcolithic pictures, or rather, in the absence of physical female features the identification of figures of women is always open to question.
Womens' breasts are indicated only in a few instances and these pictures are almost exclusively confined to the very earliest stylistic group of paintings of the agriculturists (Figs.: 361,376,387,392,394). In most cases, women are recognizable by their pregnancy or in heterosexual intercourse scenes, which are rare (Figs.: 387,395-9). While in the mesolithic picture scenes women could be recognized by the clear sex-specific division of labour, scenes which would allow an analysis of this nature are almost absent in chalcolithic paintings.

Fig.:394



Scenes of heterosexual intercourse are very rarely found in the chalcolithic pictures. One of these comes from Jaora, and is comparable with a similar picture on a pottery sherd from the chalcolithic site Daimabad in Maharashtra (Sali,S.A., 1986:Fig.71/20; IAR.: 1958/9:Fig.7). At Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla a group of ithyphallic men is seen standing in front of a reclining woman (Fig.: 396).

At Firengi, a picture shows a copulating pair beneath the painting of a deer (Fig.: 399), and a very similar picture scene from Narsinghgarh (Fig.: 387) shows a copulating pair beneath a bovid. In both these pictures several persons are shown carrying loads on their heads.

From Urden comes the depiction of several women obviously exhibiting their genitals (Fig.: 398). These figures are close to several figures of boxers and wrestlers.

A few other heterosexual intercourse scenes are known from Kathotia and Satkunda, but their stylistic affiliations are not always clear (Fig.: 397).

It is remarkable that in just this period of the early agriculturists, which is generally considered the time of the great mother goddesses, women should play such an inferior part in the rock pictures.

Fig.:396

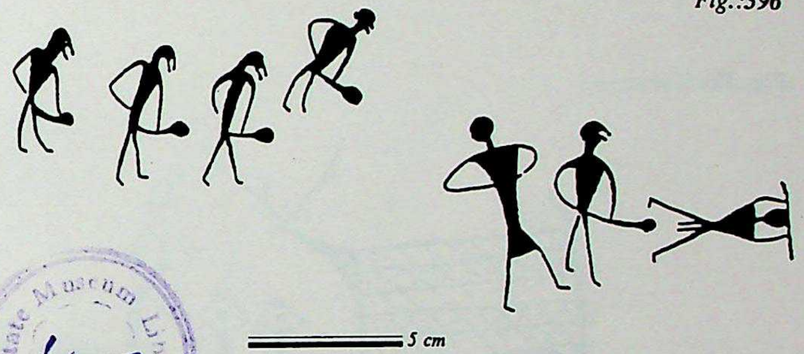


Fig.:395:Jaora
Fig.:396:Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla
Fig.:397:Kathotia
Fig.:398:Urden

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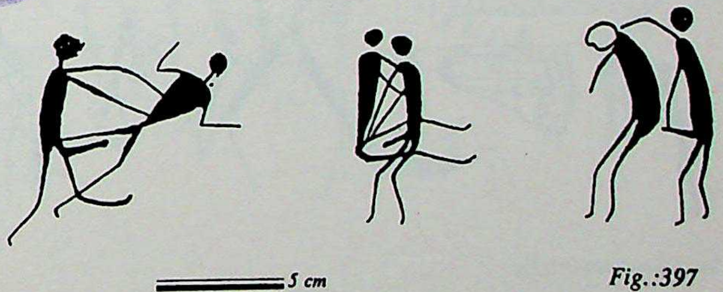


Fig.:397

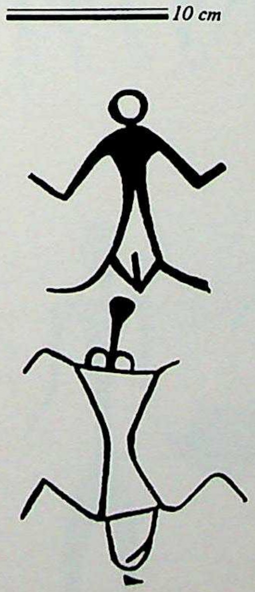
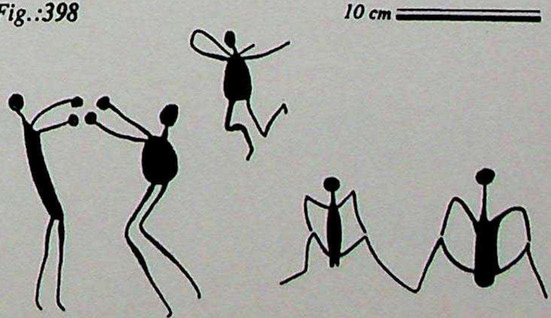


Fig.:395

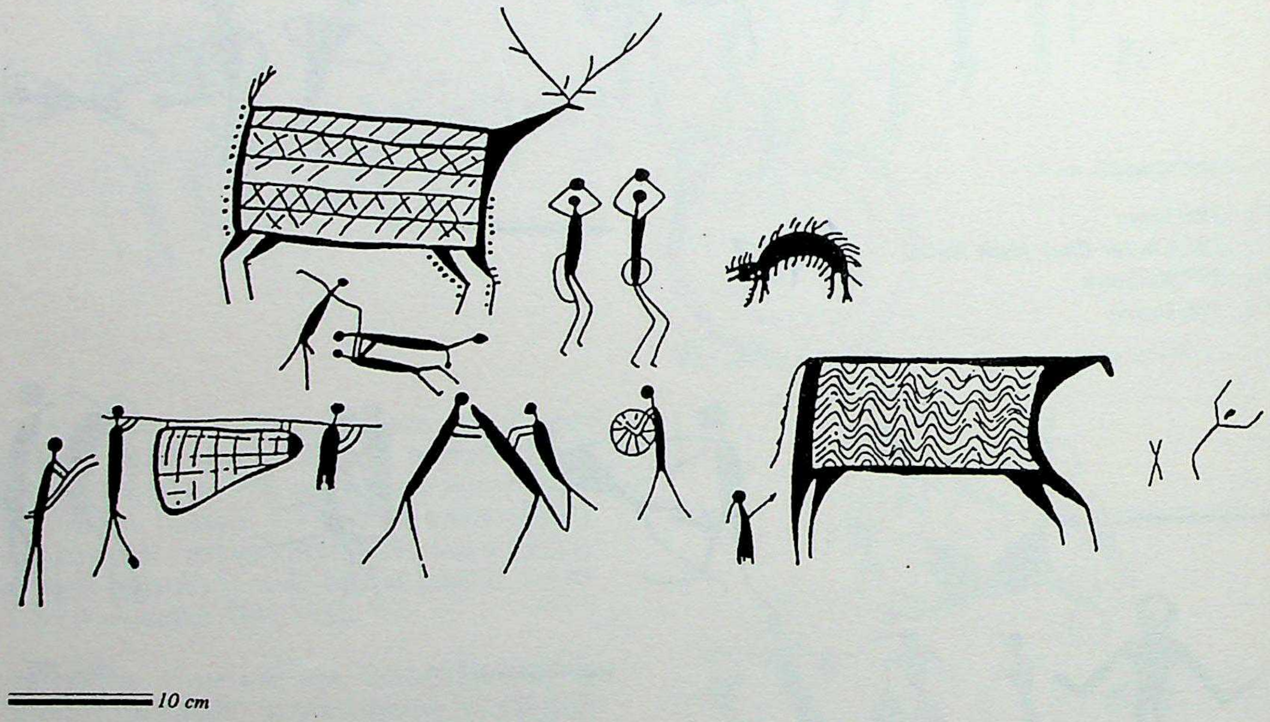
Fig.:398



Depictions of man are more outspoken. The male genitals are regularly shown, and several picture groups show homosexual activities (Figs.: 400-1). A pederastic scene is known from Lakhajoar (Fig.: 400), and quite a number of other pictures show festivities(?) with strong homoerotic overtones. A very beautiful scene is known from Kathotia, where two files of ithyphallic men, their arms placed at the back of their front man, are grouped left and right from a bigger ithyphallic harp player. The phallus of this person is drawn very minutely, with even the testicles shown in a sort of twisted perspective (Fig.: 401), or so I presume.

Along with this chain dancers and the harp player are men sitting on each others shoulders three high. One ithyphallic man is lying on his back holding his rather exaggerated member in one hand. Below the figure of a bovid are several smaller figures, one of them carrying a porterage yoke. It is likely, that these scenes depict bacchanalia. The theme "harp-player and dancers" is repeatedly shown in chalcolithic rock-art, and seems to represent a set choreography for a particular festivity or celebration (Figs.: 696-9). All the chalcolithic pictures represent very much a man's world, in which women are depicted very peripherally, if at all, and then quite subdued. Similar tendencies are also visible in the neolithic/chalcolithic pictures in the Southern Deccan, where women appear very subservient to ithyphallic men (Figs.: 402,476-82).

Fig.:399:Urden



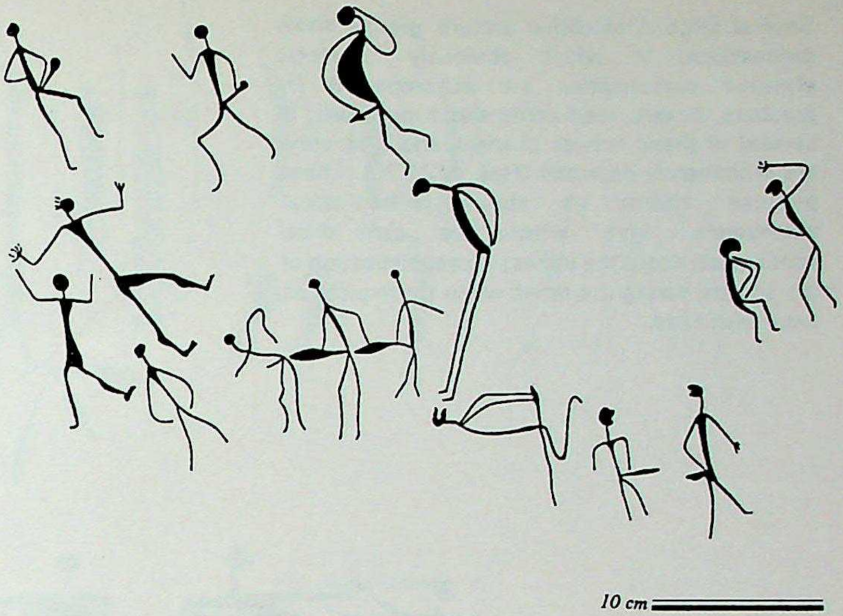
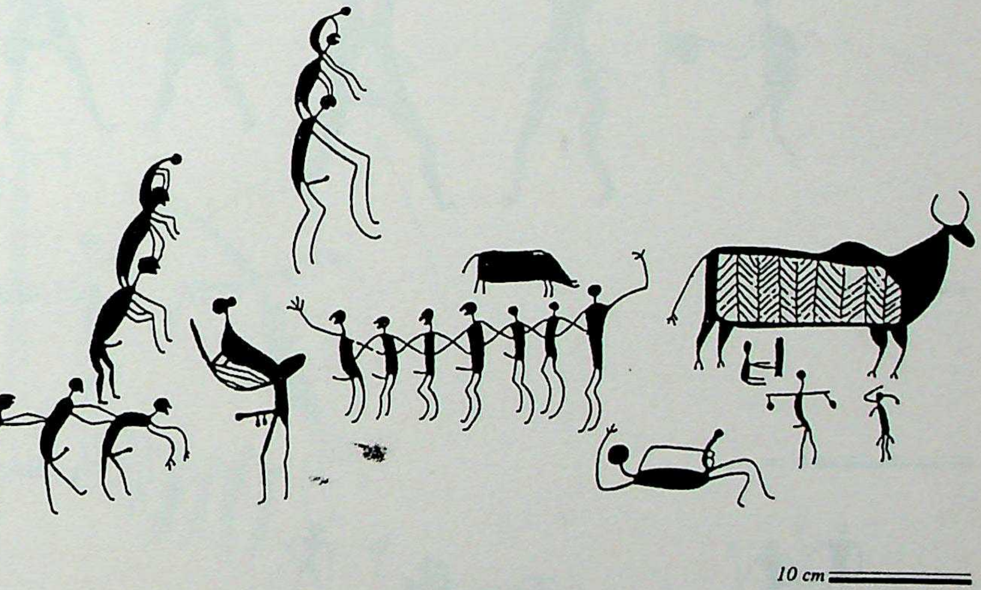


*Fig.:**400**:Jaora*

*Fig.:**401**:Kathotia*



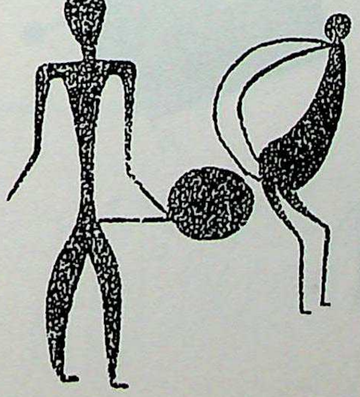


*Fig.:**402**:Koppagallu*

10 cm

Several large chalcolithic picture groups show processions, in which obviously hierarchic elevated personalities are accompanied by acrobats, boxers, load-carriers and musicians. In several of these scenes chariots and their crew are prominently depicted (Figs.: 428-30). These pictures inform us about technological innovations, from which we can draw conclusions about the increasing sophistication of the society during the times when these pictures were fashioned.

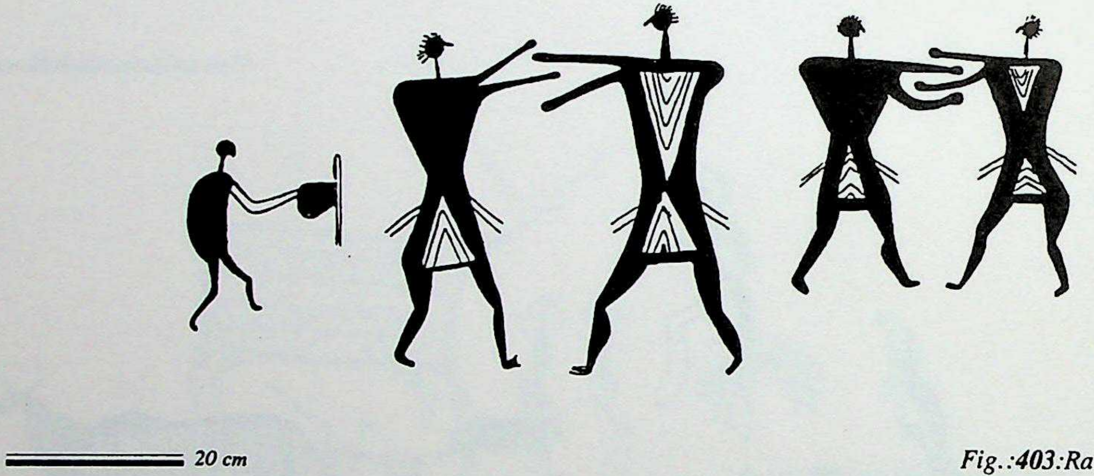
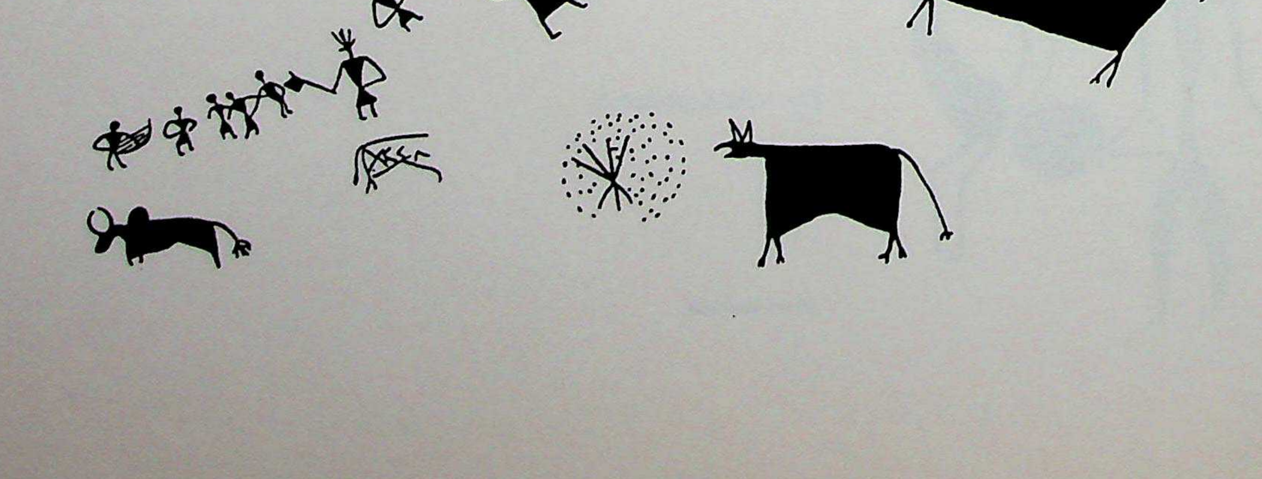


*Fig.:**403**:Raisen - Ramchaja*

*Fig.:**404**:Dekan - Adarshila*



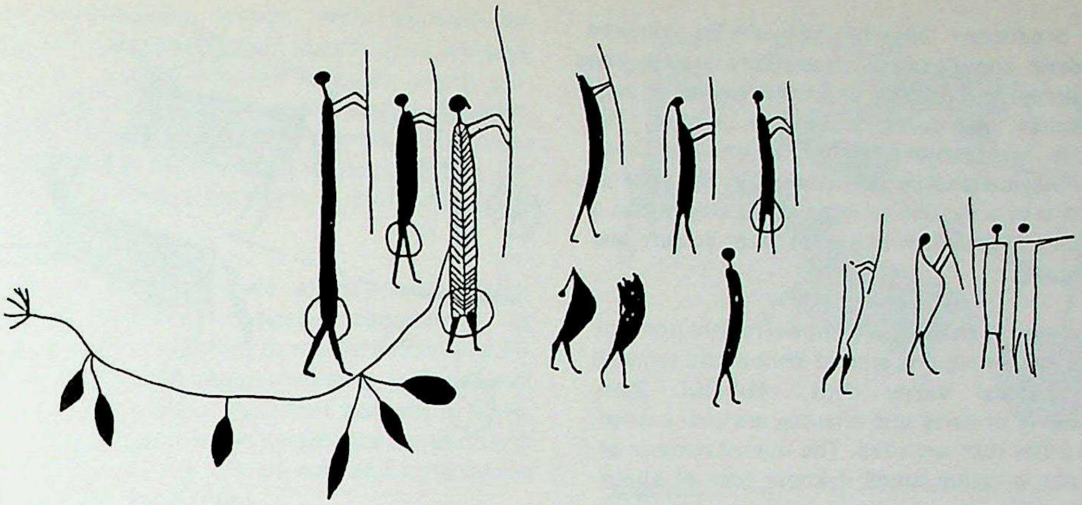


Fig.:405:Firengi

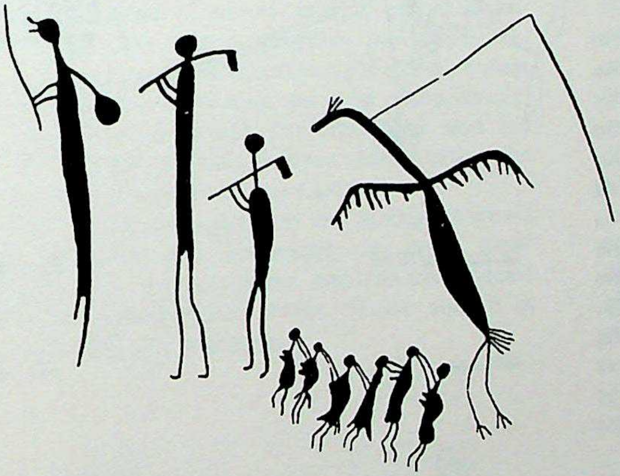
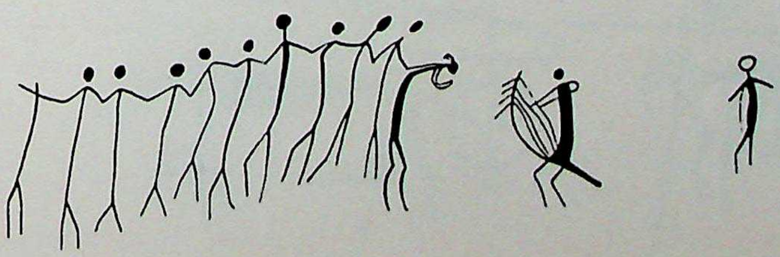


Fig.:406:Firengi

Fig.:407:Firengi



The production of wheeled vehicles required thorough knowledge of compound materials, the interaction of moveable and static elements, and, of course, the domestication of animals. The chariot represents the tip of an economic, technological and social pyramid, at the base of which was a system of specialized labour and a complex mechanism of control over society and resources.

Depictions of chariots are known mainly from the rock painting regions around Bhopal and those in the Chambal Valley (Figs.: 408-30). Stray depictions of carts and chariots are also known from other rock-art sites. The overall number of chariots is rather small; I know only of about eighty in all.

The earliest chariot depictions appear in the very first stylistic pictures of the agriculturists, and already in these depictions we see besides cattle as draught animals the use of equids. Although the species of these animals is not very clear, we can presume that as only the horse or the ass have to be considered as draught animals (Figs.: 408-10,413,418-20,422-30).

The draught animals were brought in pairs or in double pairs under a straight yoke, which was connected to the wheeled parts of the chariot by a pole (Figs.: 408,415-20). The depicted chariots allow several interpretations of their construction. About half of them show a straight yoke which was connected crosswise to a central staff, while others show the reins as the sole connection between the charioteer and the draught animals (Figs.: 409-10,413, 422,425-30). I presume that these depictions only represent a more schematic way to portray a chariot. It is remarkable that both renderings should appear contemporaneously and at the same sites.

Fig.:408:Putli Karar
Fig.:409:Kathotia
Fig.:410:Firengi

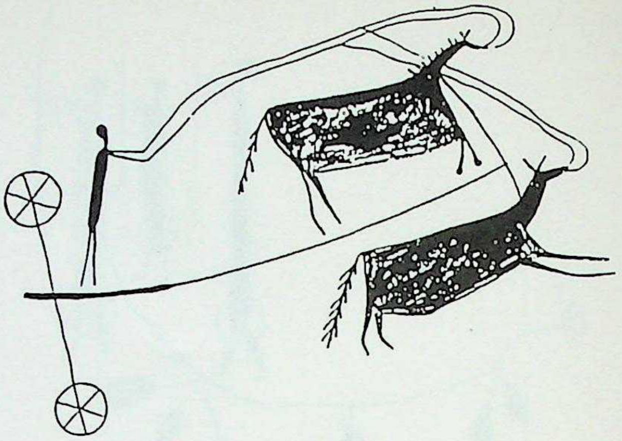


Fig.:408

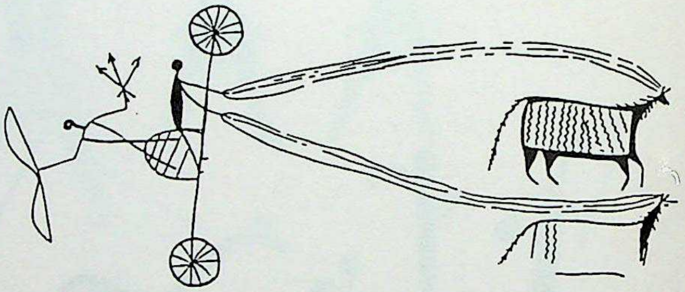
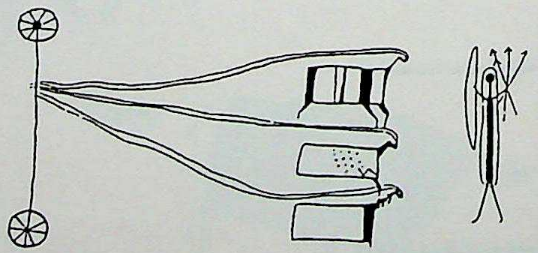
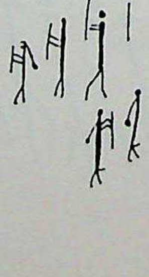


Fig.:409

Fig.:410

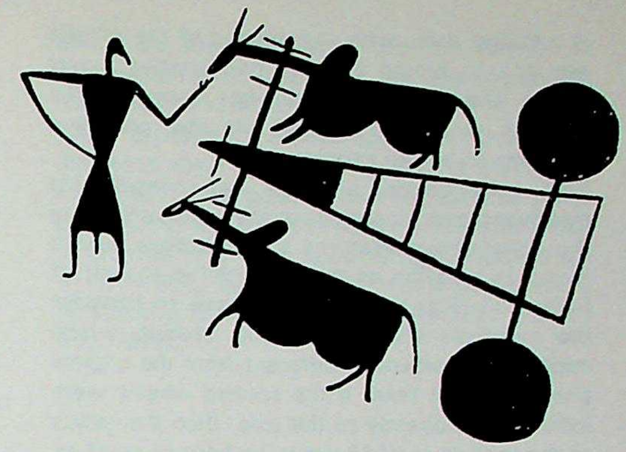




Besides chariots, which were light-weight vehicles, suitable for high speed, there are also pictures of two-wheeled vehicles which are much heavier and obviously meant transport loads. These vehicles tally in their construction features with bullock carts which, till today, are the means of load transport in rural India (Figs.: 411,416,452).

Chariots, as mentioned already, were light-weight vehicles, basically constructed to speedily carry warriors to the battlefield and for the pursuit of the vanquished enemy. The chariot also drove socially important persons in style, whether in battle or on ceremonial occasions. In the Near East the chariot was also used by the aristocracy for hunting.
Since most of the pictures of chariots are not embedded into narrative groups, the actual use of the depicted chariots is not clearly established.

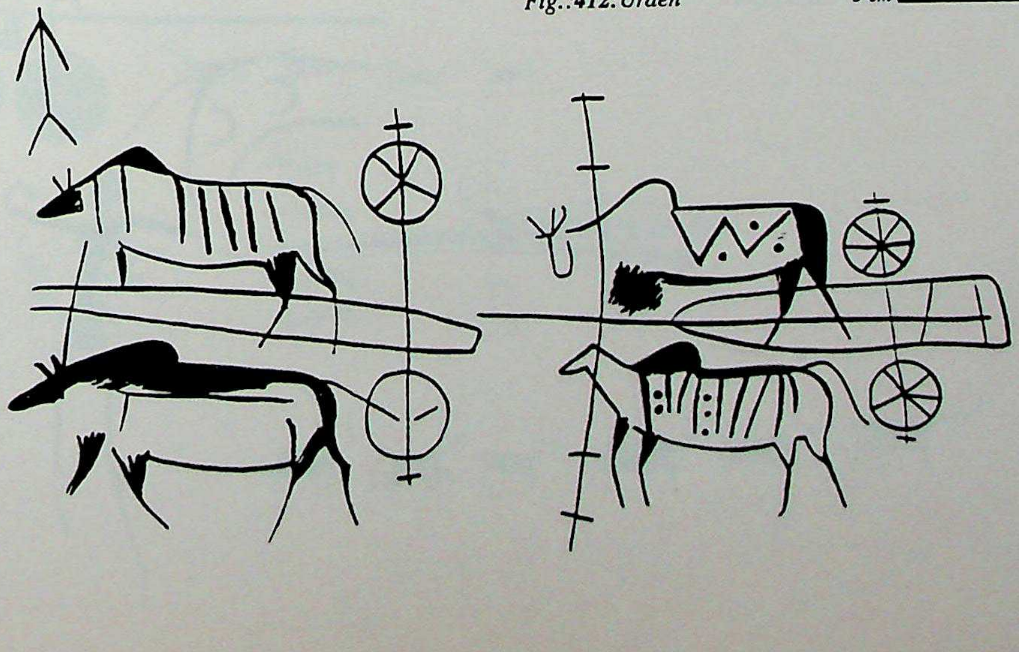
The chariots shown in obviously cultic procession scenes, are often surrounded by jesters, musicians, dancers and hierarchic elevated personalities (Figs.: 428-30). These vehicles consist of an axle with a spoked wheel on either side and a platform on which the charioteer and the warrior(s) could stand. A pole connected the yoke with the axle. Surprisingly, the platform on which the charioteer and the warrior stand is rarely shown. More often the charioteer clings to the bare axle.
Details of the harnessing of the draught animals are generally too schematic to draw clear conclusions; their features can be understood only by interpolations of the details shown in several different depictions.



5 cm *Fig.:411:Pahargarh - Asan River*

Since axle pins are not shown in any chalcolithic chariot depictions, nor is in any instance the axle drawn over the periphery of the wheels, I have to conclude that the axle was rotating and the spokes of the wheels set directly into it. One depiction shows the spokes of the wheels enclosing the axle in pairs tangentially (Fig.: 429). Each of these details has ambivalent implications as far as the construction principles of the chariot are concerned. Since in the bullock cart depictions of the historic period axles, in a few instances, are drawn over the periphery of the wheels and axle pins are shown as well (Figs.: 412,669), we also have to consider the absence of these details in the chalcolithic pictures.

Fig.:412:Urden 5 cm



A rotating axle, with the spokes of the wheels set into it, would demand two bearings, over which the platform could be fastened. The traction would be relayed via the pole and platform on to the rotating axle.
This construction principle has considerable disadvantages; nonetheless they are verified by the construction features of the bronze chariot found in a cache at the chalcolithic mound of Daimabad (Figs.: 432-3). We have to consider the miniature character of this chariot, which might be considerably different from the original chariot of that time. If the spoked wheels were indeed fixed directly to the axle, then the radius of the wheels would have to be kept as small as possible, to reduce the leverage between spokes and axle to protect the wheel from warping.

With the depiction of chariots the artists met the limits of the then current concepts of perspective, which in several instances had to be altered for a more naturalistic description of particular details. Several interacting elements, like the yoked draught animals, the wheels and the charioteer had to be positioned according to the particular direction of the movement.
It seems that the painters were not satisfied anymore with the age old concept of twisting every constituent part of a subject into a frontal view, but tried to capture the dynamic function of the technical unit "chariot".

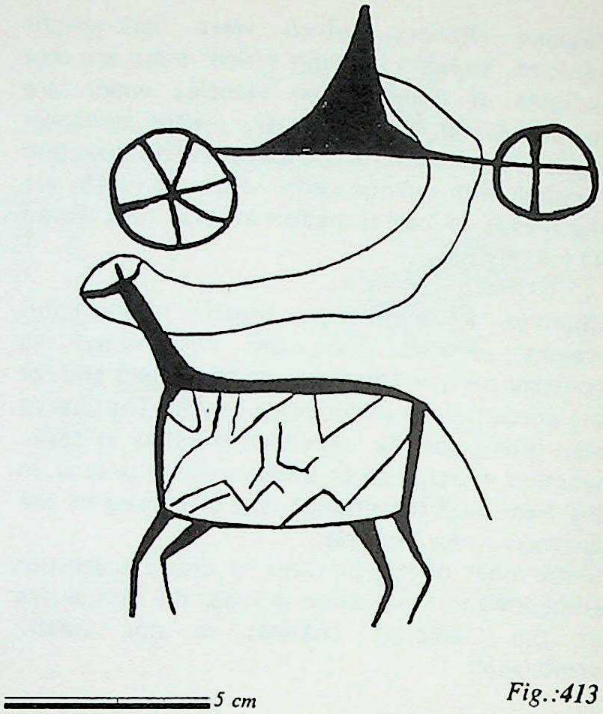


Fig.:413

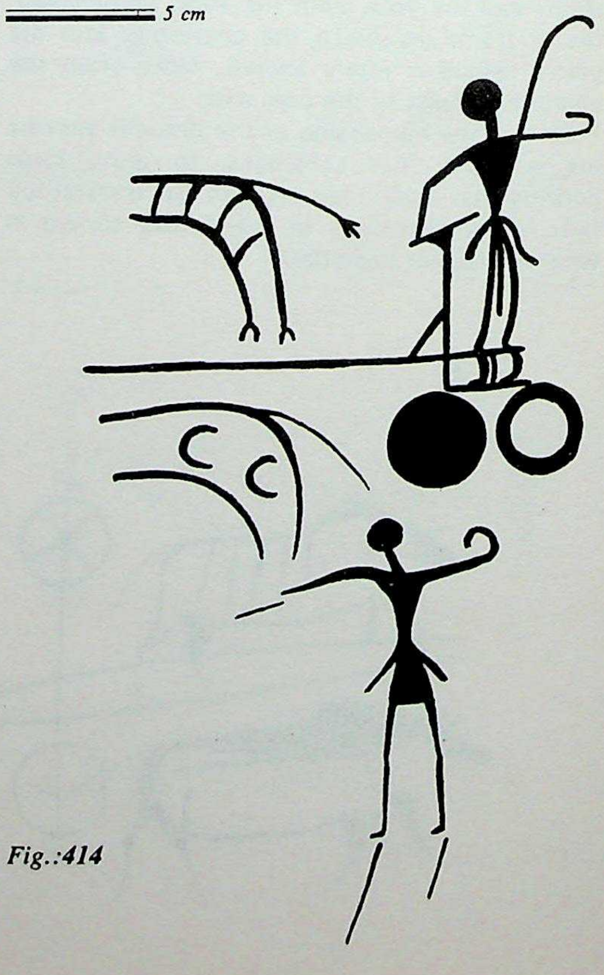


Fig.:414

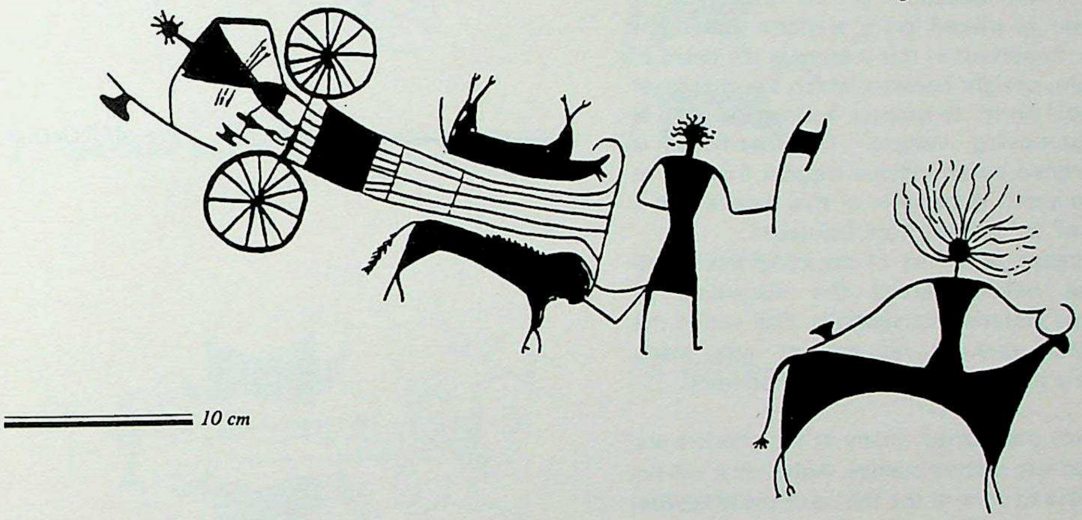
Fig.:413:Firengi
Fig.:414:Firengi

In all the chariot depictions, both wheels are shown by a sort of twisted birds-eye view (Figs.: 408-13,415-20,422-30). Both wheels are connected to the axle, from which the pole is shown extending towards the yoke. In several pictures more than one pole is shown, but all of them meet the yoke between the draught animals (Figs.: 415,420).

The draught animals are similarly shown in side view above and below the pole shaft, in some cases with both animals having their backs towards the pole (Figs.: 415,418-20,424), in others the animal --further from the viewer-- is placed above the pole with the legs towards it (Figs.: 408,411,412,417).

In the depiction of a quadriga, found at a site in the Asan River Valley, each pair is placed on either side of the pole, so that each animal's legs are directed towards the pole. To do so, one pair of animals is shown lying on their back (Fig.: 416), which, according to the then accepted perspective convention, indicated dead animals (Fig.: 393).

Fig.:415:Dekan - Adarshila



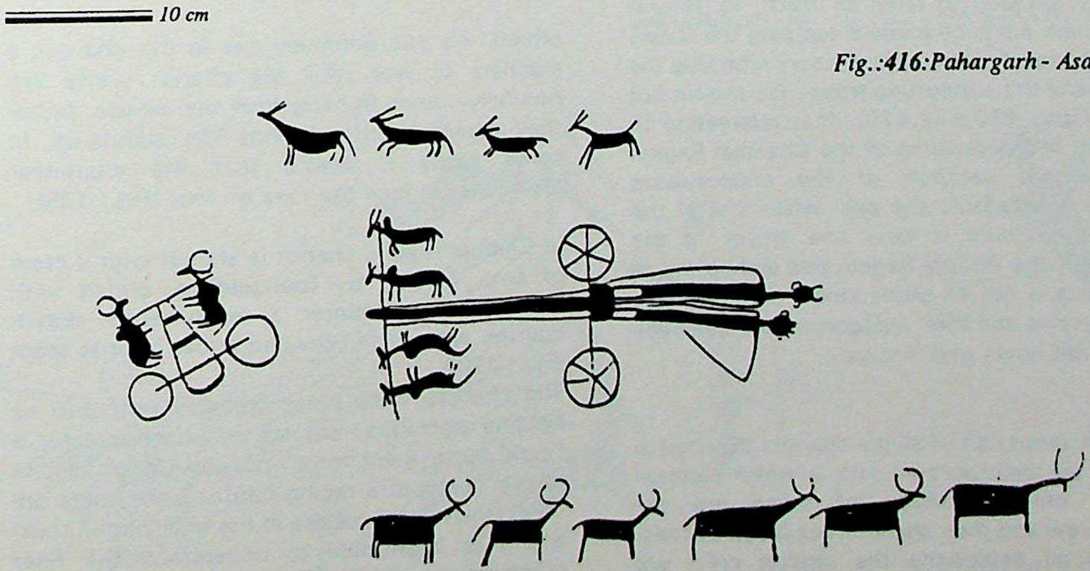


Fig.:416:Pahargarh - Asan River

Similarly difficult was the positioning of the chariot crew, which had to be shown standing upright at the chariot's platform between the wheels. In some cases the charioteer is shown somehow clinging to the axle (Figs.: 409,426, 428-30), in others he is shown standing at the pole between the draught animals and the wheels, which would have been possible if the platform extended that far (Fig.: 408).
But in most cases the crew is shown extending from the platform backwards, i.e., against the direction of traction (Figs.: 415-6,418-20, 422,427).

Stylistically revolutionary is the depiction of a chariot found in Firengi (Fig.: 414), which shows the wheels of the vehicle placed one behind the other in the direction of the traction. The charioteer is placed on a platform above the wheels. Important in this picture is the detail of a straight, upright banister which the charioteer could hold on to, to balance against the jerks of the fast-moving vehicle. This handlebar is strengthened by an oblique support fixed on to the pole shaft. A banister of this type is also a feature of the chariot from Daimabad.
The complex problems of depicting interlinked technical details forced the discarding of traditional pictorial conventions. Still within the chalcolithic rock-art no attempt was made towards a perspective using foreshortening.

As already mentioned, many of the chariots are imbedded into picture scenes. Although it will not be possible to unravel the theme of these scenes, still it is interesting to point to a few general features. About half the chariots are manned by a charioteer, while the draught animals are led by a groom walking in front of them. In several cases there are foot-soldiers securing the flanks of the chariot. Antagonistic warriors attacking the chariot and the supporting troops are shown but rarely (Figs.: 420,422,425). It is interesting to note that in the pictures of the Chambal Region the standard weapon of the chariot-using warriors is invariably the axe, while that of the opposing warriors is bow and arrow. In the pictures of the Bhopal Region this dichotomy of armaments is not as pronounced; here both the chariot crews and their antagonists are generally armed with bows and arrows.

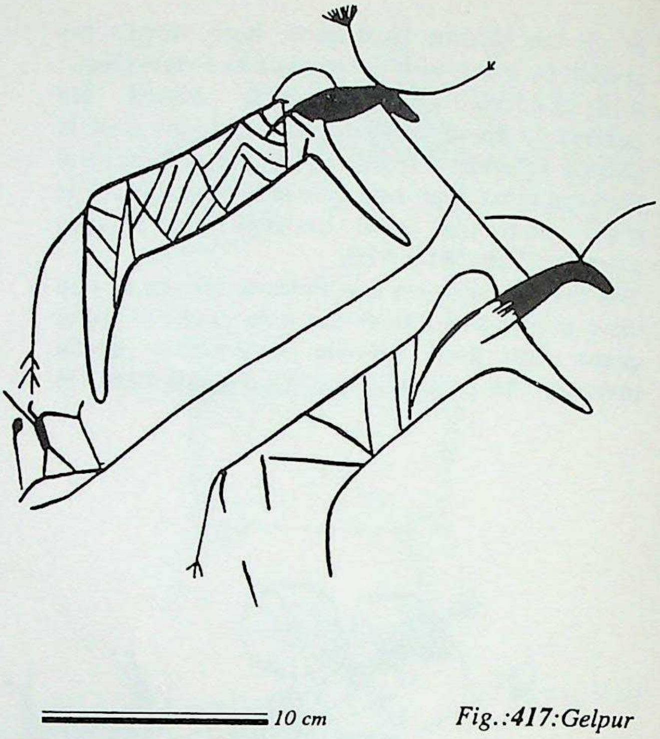


*Fig.:**417**:Gelpur*

Although about half of all the chariots depicted in rock-art are incorporated into a wider pictorial context, only in seven of these are the chariot-crew and their allied forces faced by foes. Since in all depictions the chariot crew are armed, we can definitely see in the chariots a machine of war. Still the chariot crews are nowhere shown fighting from the vehicle, rather they present their weapons like standards. In some cases it seems that the charioteer dismounts to face the foes on foot (Fig.: 425).

In Chibbar Nulla a chariot is shown with a crew of two, flanked by foot-soldiers, armed with axes. They encounter a much larger drawn warrior, aiming his bow and arrow against them (Fig.: 420).
The chariots were most probably not used as fighting platforms, but rather as mounts for a "rapid deployment force" moving troops fast to crucial points in a raging battle. Since there are no extensive war scenes in the chalcolithic rock-art, it is impossible to understand the finer organizations of armies.

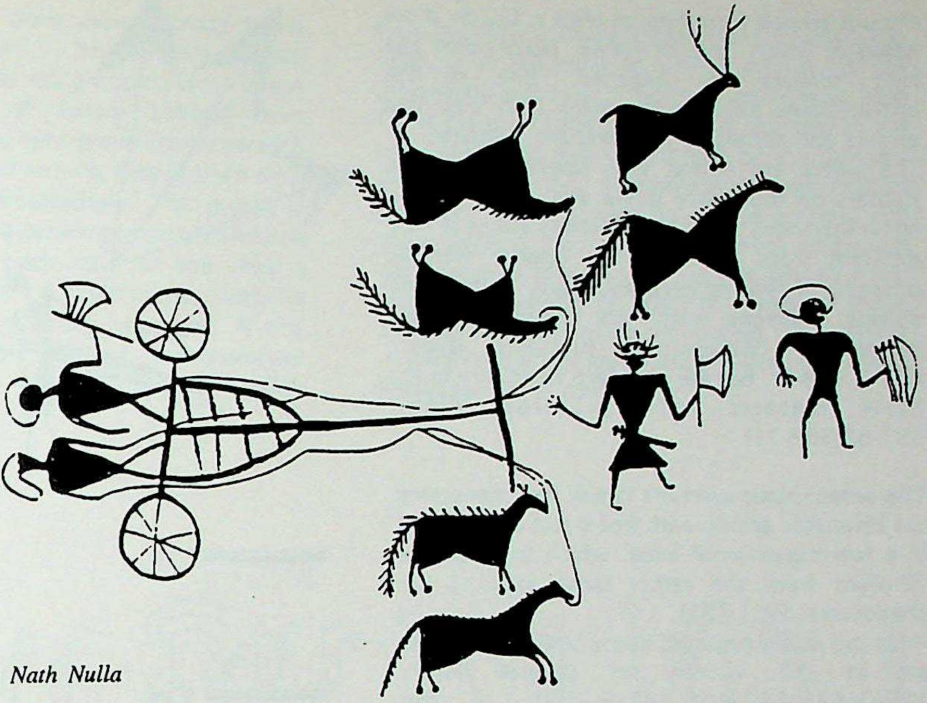


*Fig.:**418**:Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla*

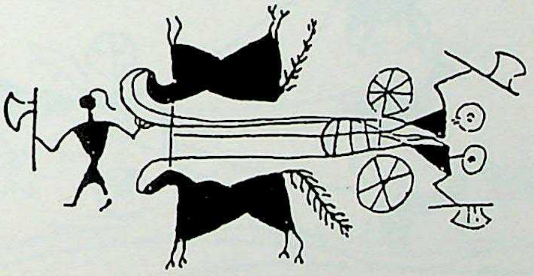
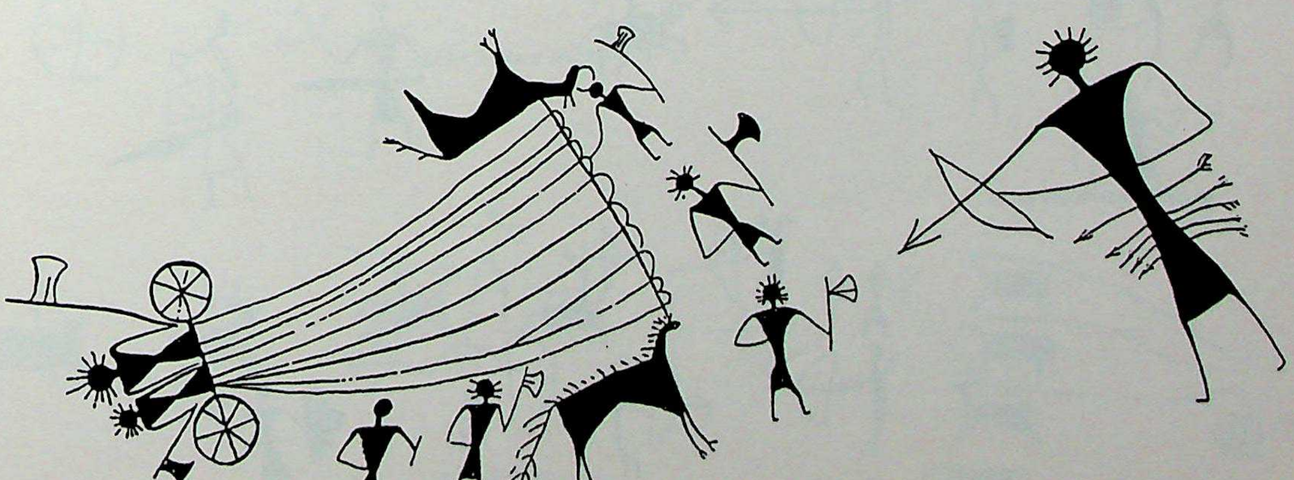


*Fig.:**419**:Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla*

*Fig.:**420**:Chibbar Nulla*



Picture groups from Firengi (Figs.: 422-5) show fights in which chariot crews, horse-riders and foot soldiers are engaged. One of the chariot-borne soldiers is armed with bow and arrows and carries an axe over the shoulder.
The riders are armed with spears, while the fighters on foot carry bows and arrows and in some instances small axes, whose shape is very different from the axes the chariot warriors possess. A few fighters also carry swords and shields, weapons which are shown extremely rarely in chalcolithic pictures (Figs.: 421-2,448-9), but are standard weaponry in the early historic rock pictures (Figs.: 557-62,568-71).

The antagonistic warriors facing the charioteers are invariably armed with bows and arrows, and in a few cases small axes, which in shape are different from the rather large axes of the charioteers (Fig.: 422).
Axes are rarely depicted in the chalcolithic rock-art in the vicinity of Bhopal (Figs.: 422-3,425,442,445,447-9,702). In the chalcolithic rock pictures of the Chambal Valley they are the standard weapon (Figs.: 404,415,418-20,438-9,455,699). The arrow-heads in the chalcolithic pictures are frequently shown flanged, indicating the use of metal. In the later chalcolithic groups we frequently encounter warriors, whose raised fingers seem to have metamorphosed into bundles of arrows (Figs.: 421-3,428).

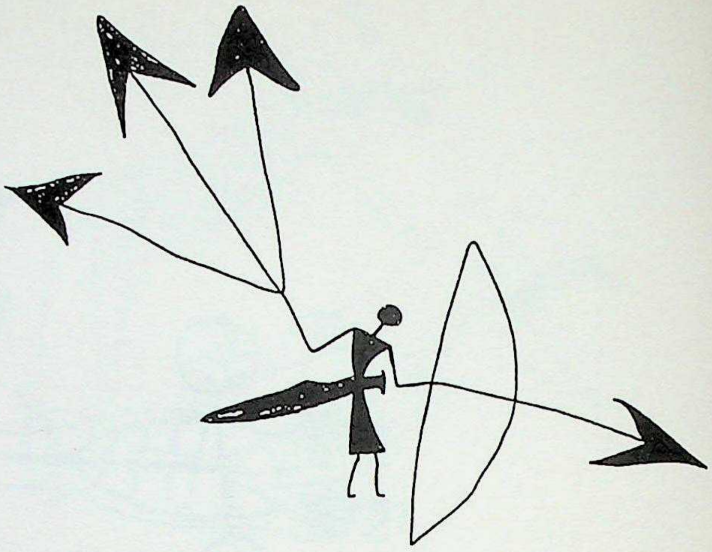
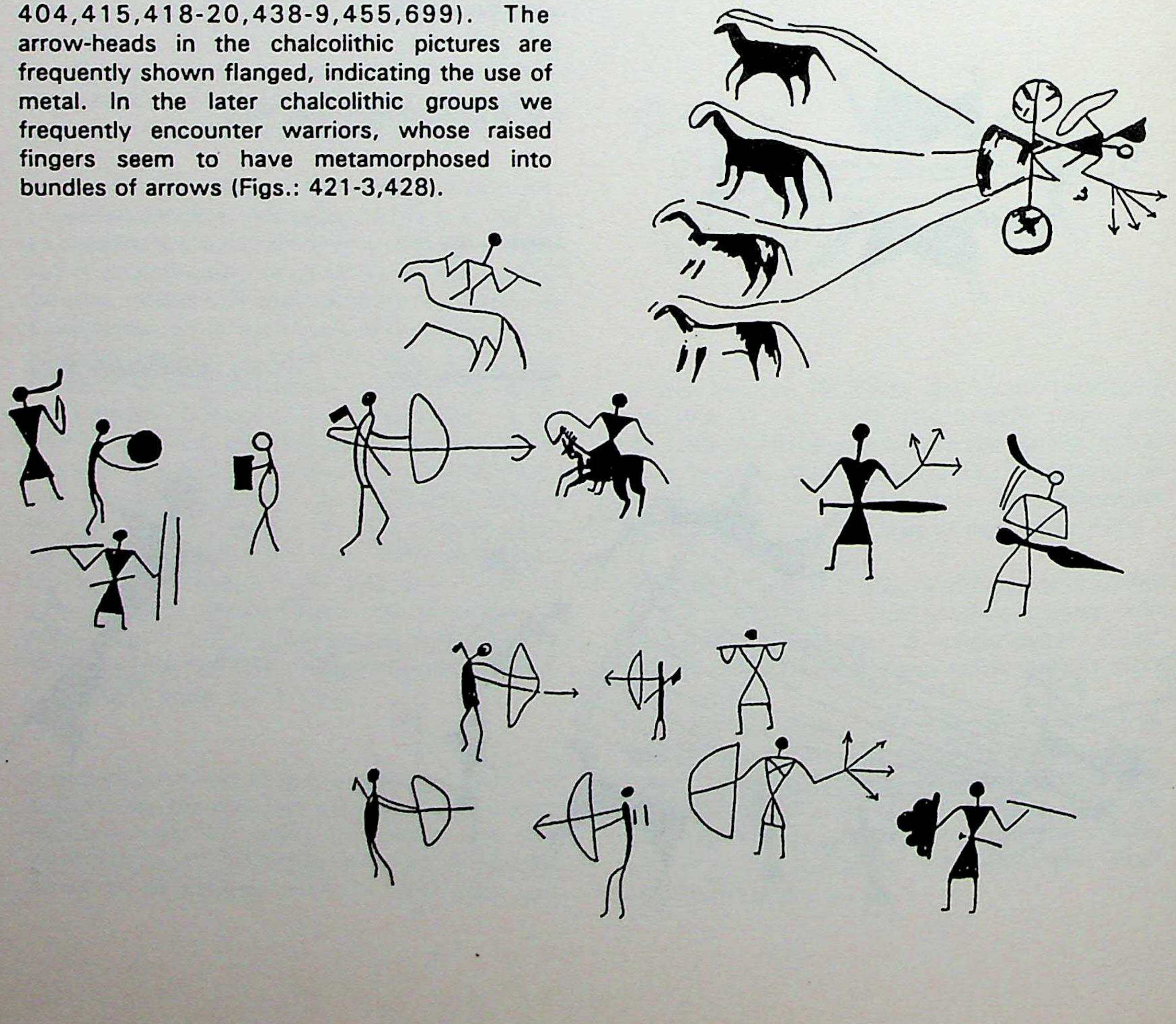


Fig.:421:Firengi

Fig.:422:Firengi



One rather crudely done picture group found near Gelpur (Fig.: 423), shows two distinct groups of people. The left group consists of ten unarmed persons of whom several have encircled bodies. The right group shows persons armed with bows and arrows. One of them aims his arrow rather threateningly. The group of armed men is led by a person carrying his arrows in a quiver at his back, and an axe --like a standard-- in front. A load-carrier with a porterage yoke is marching after him. A tiny chariot is seen below his feet, the charioteer lying close by, his weapons scattered (Fig.: 423).

How to interpret these antagonistic groups is not clear. It is tempting to see in one group the indigenous population, fighting immigrants who knew the use of the chariot. But we cannot see on whose side the sympathies of the painters are, nor is the technological demarcation between fighters with bows and arrows, and those fighting from chariots or from horseback with sword and shield, javelin and axe so clear-cut. The absence of absolute dates of these pictures is all the more regrettable, as it allows us only cryptic glimpses into the period in which Indian history is rooted.

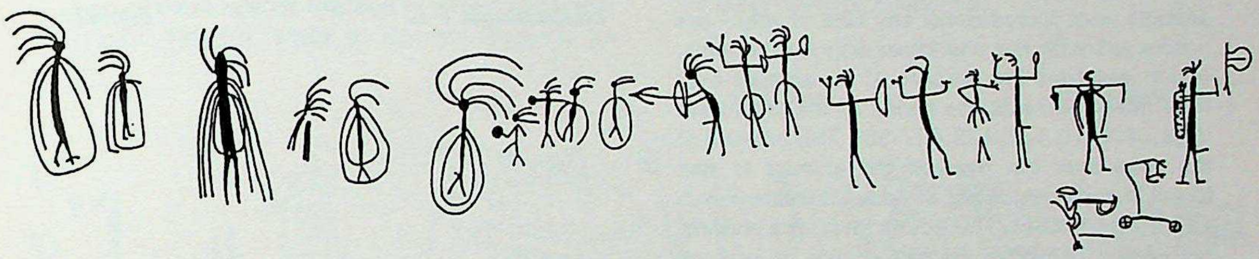


Fig.:423:Gelpur

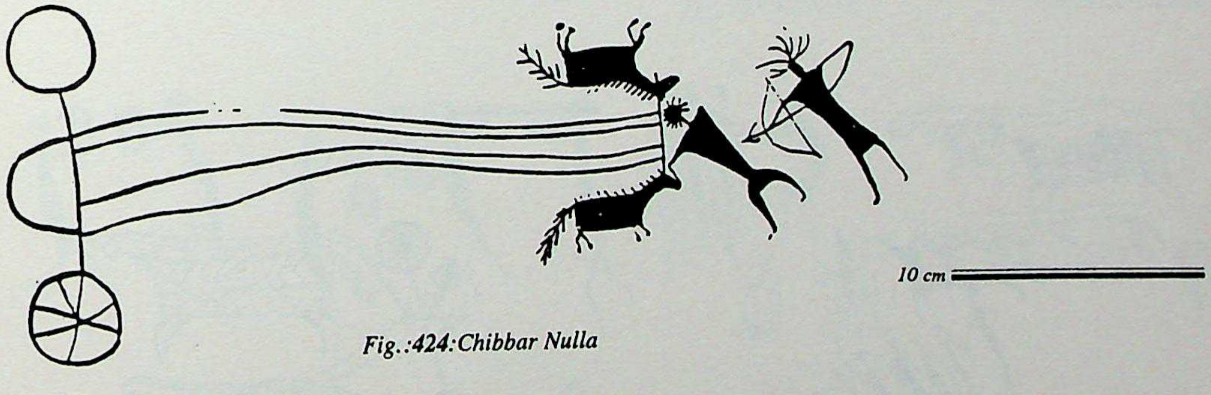


Fig.:424:Chibbar Nulla

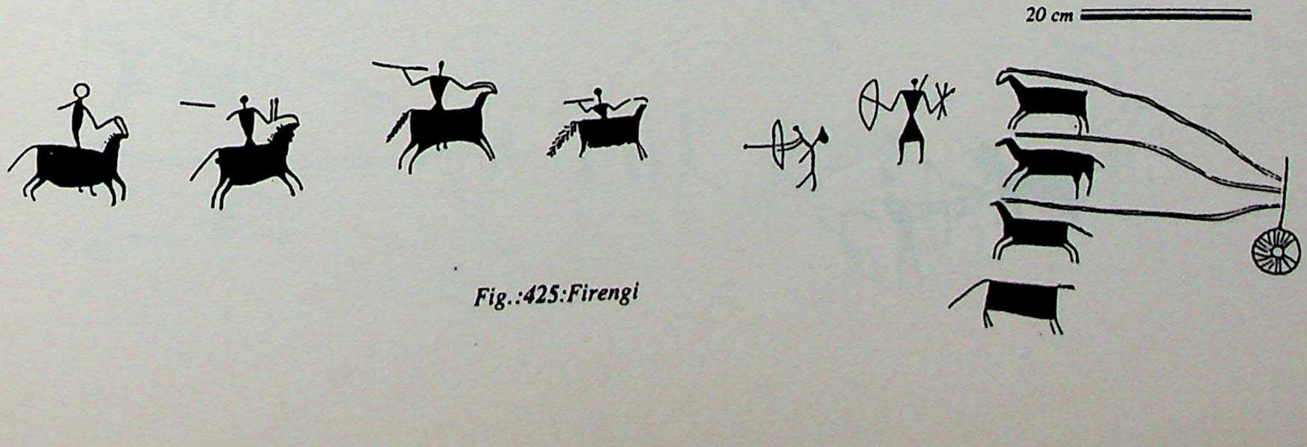


Fig.:425:Firengi

There is no evidence in the rock pictures that chariots were used for hunting, although in several picture scenes wild animals are shown in the vicinity of chariots (Figs.: 416,426). One of the best preserved depictions from the site Firengi shows a chariot with two dogs following (Fig.: 426). In the same picture scene a file of marching(?) persons can be seen below two antelopes, as also a hunter aiming his arrow at an animal.

Many chariot depictions are exceedingly schematic, so much so that no construction detail really can be made out, nor does it seem the artist was very well acquainted with these. Quite a number of chariots do not show any superstructure, the charioteer somehow clings to the axle between the wheels. The draught animals --not forced under any kind of yoke-- are connected with the charioteer only by the reins, which lead from the muzzles of the animals over their heads towards the hands of the charioteer (Figs.: 409-10,422,425,427-30). This position of the reins over the head of the animals is also found in early depictions of ridden animals (Figs.: 422-5,434,440-6). This points towards a uniform harnessing of ridden animals, cattle as well as horses. Bits for the rein control of horses obviously were not know then; they appear for the first time only in early historic rock pictures (Figs.: 568-77).

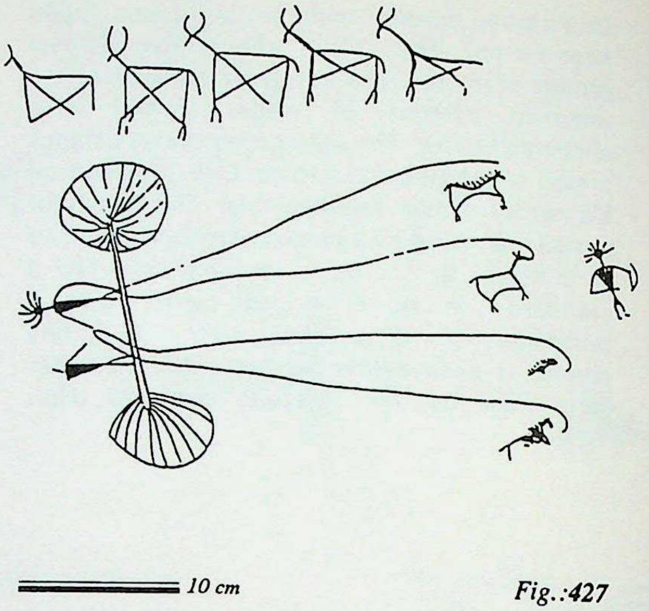
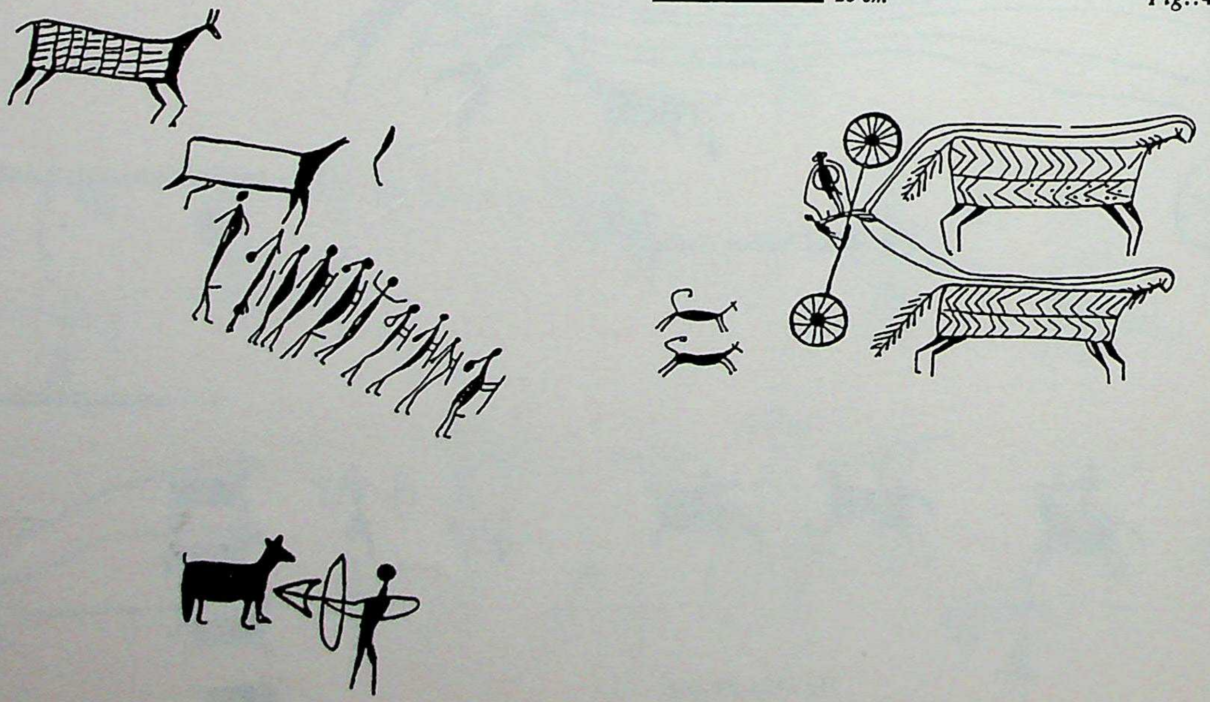


Fig.:427

Fig.:426:Firengi
Fig.:427:Bhanpura - Katiria Kund

Fig.:426



Although the artists seem to be less informed about technical details, the scenic imbedding of some of these chariot depictions is so complex, that the reason for the neglect of technical details has to be interpreted otherwise than as ignorance. It might have been a convention of convenience, since the artists are very particular about the portrayal of certain other features, which to us seem of little consequence, as for example the charioteers carrying arrows in a basket or a quiver at their backs, while the bow together with the reins are held in both outstretched hands before them (Figs.: 428,430).

In the procession scenes from Kathotia, Jaora and Firengi there are depictions of load-bearers. The load is invariably carried hung extended from a pole placed on the shoulders of two persons. In two of these scenes the load is shown as circular (Figs.: 429-30) while in another instance an elongated load is depicted (Fig.: 428). Musicians are placed prominently in these scenes. In Jaora (Fig.: 428) a harp player is walking in front of a chariot, in the other scenes (Figs.: 429-30) some people seem to be playing cymbals.

In two of these scenes several square-shaped persons are depicted, between whose legs small seats are indicated. In one instance from Jaora one of these figures is brandishing a bow above his head (Fig.: 428). In front of him are several smaller figures, of whom an ithyphallic person, whose fingers are metamorphosed into arrows underlines the theatrical bent of these scenes. In the chariot scene from Kathotia there are two ithyphallic(?) boxers at the beginning of the procession (Fig.: 429). In Firengi (Fig.: 430), the end of the procession shows two persons climbing up a tree loaded with honeycombs hanging from its branches.

Fig.:428:Jaora

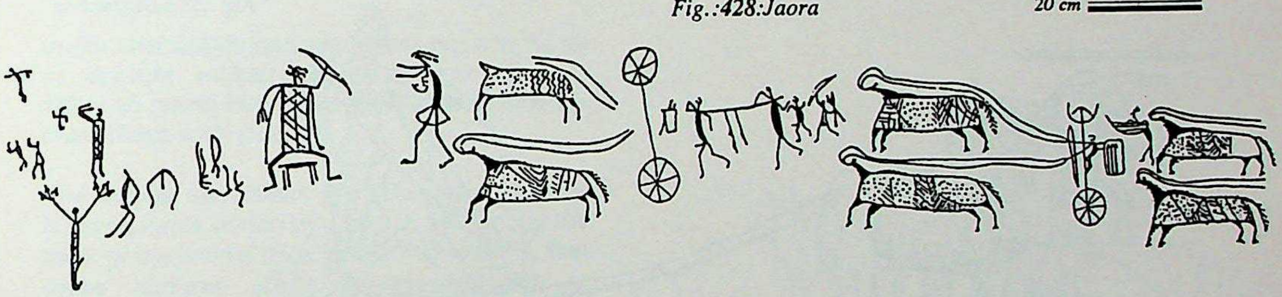


Fig.:429:Kathotia

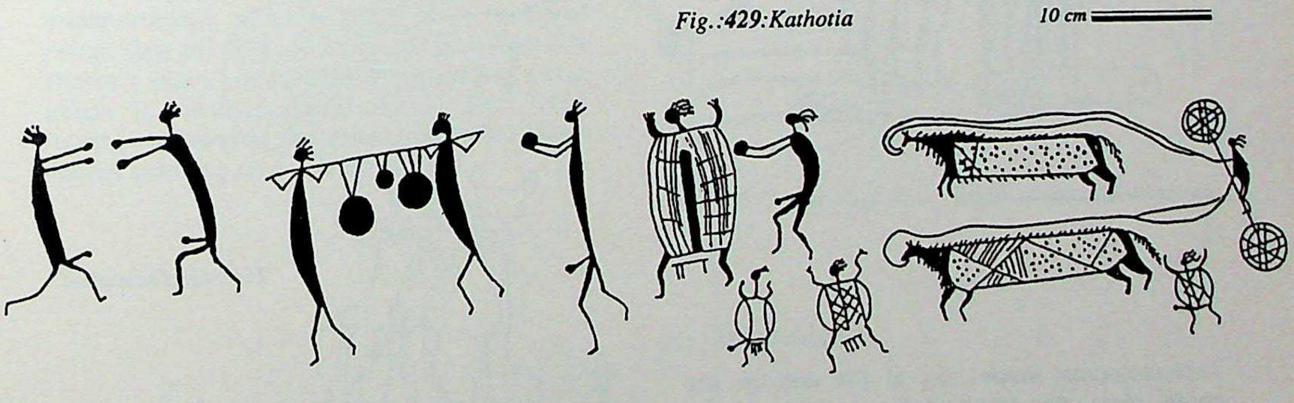
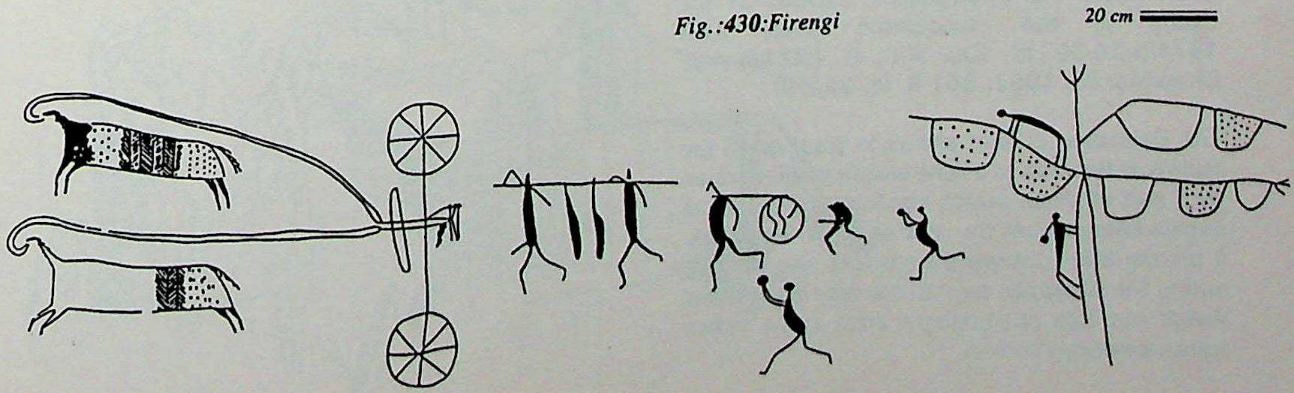


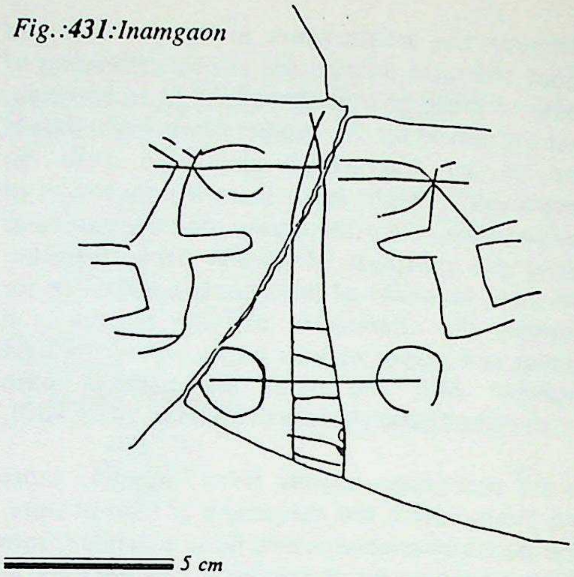
Fig.:430:Firengi



The chronological position of the Indian chariot depictions is puzzling, since they appear in the very earliest pictures belonging to the agriculturists and cattle-keepers. Wheeled vehicles are of course known to have existed in the third millennium B.C. in the Indus Valley. A considerable amount of model carts made of clay and bronze have been found in Harappan urban settlements.

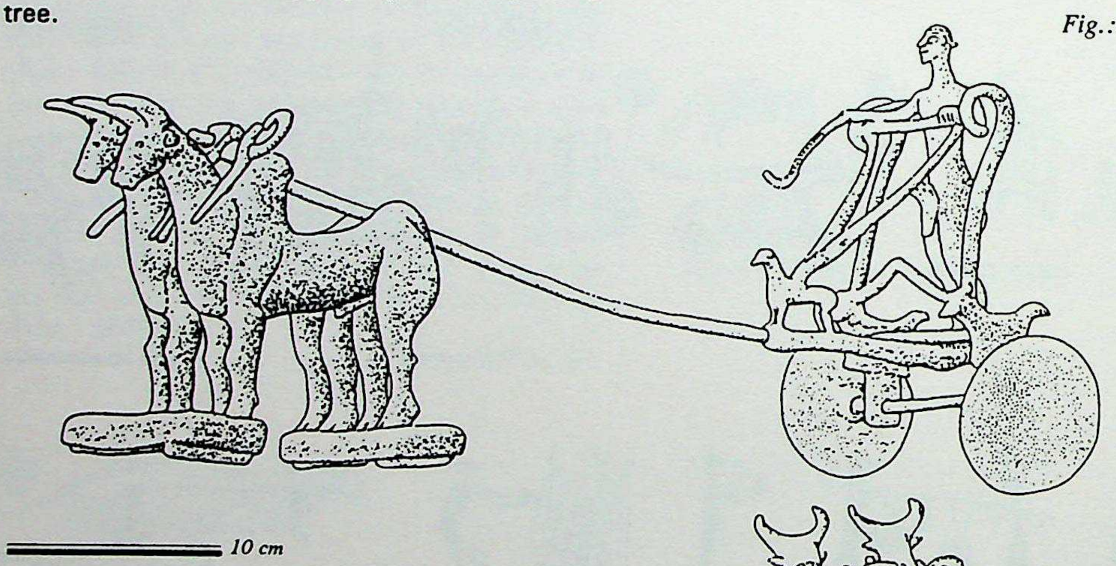
The engraving of a bullock cart on a large storage vessel was found from the later chalcolithic level at Inamgaon, which could be dated to 1 300 B.C. (Fig.: 431).

Fig.:431:Inamgaon



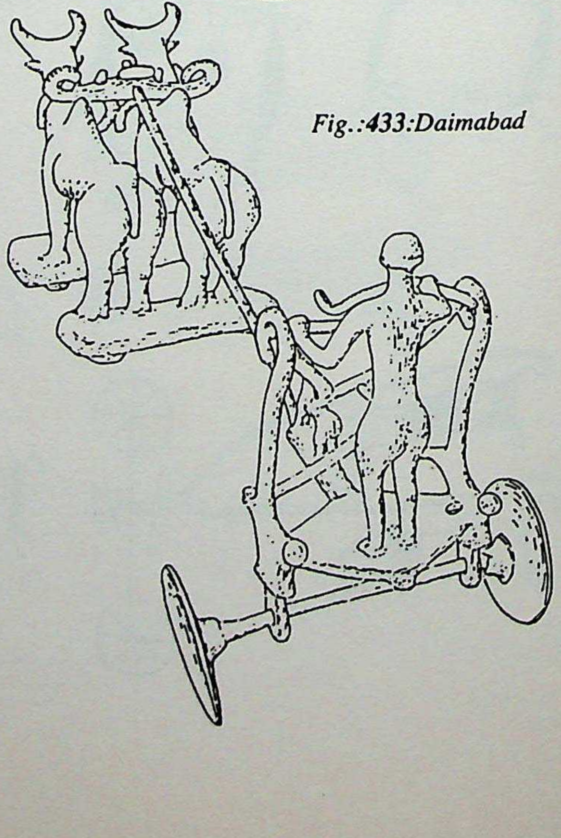
The only available chariot from the chalcolithic period in India which can be compared to the Indian rock pictures is the bronze chariot found in Daimabad in a cache together with an elephant, a rhino and a water-buffalo --all made of copper-alloy. This hoard was found by villagers who were digging up the roots of a tree.

Fig.:432:Daimabad



Archaeological inspection of the dug up site could clear the stratigraphic position of the cache in the chalcolithic levels (IAR 1974/5:29-30, Pl. XXV A-C, Pl. LXXXIII A-B; Dhawlikar,K., 1982: 361-6, Pl. 35/2-5).

Fig.:433:Daimabad



The Daimabad chariot shows in great detail the technical features of a light-weight chariot drawn by a pair of oxen, which confirms the technical details known from the rock pictures. Above all, it proves that light-weight chariots were known during the Harappan period, not only in the Indus Valley but also at peripheral sites in the Indian subcontinent.

The Daimabad chariot is drawn by a pair of long-legged oxen. The yoke has a double curve which rather indicates that it was originally developed to fit horses' necks instead of humped cattle. The extremely long pole similarly points to the originally intended harnessing of horses which need more space for their hind legs when galloping, while in a bullock-drawn vehicle it was necessary for the charioteer to get close to the draught animals which are controlled by poking their rear and by twisting their tails. The reins are used only to break speed. The yoke-ends on the Daimabad chariot show open loops, which can be understood as rein sorters, which were indispensable in crossed-rein trains, so that both animals could be forced left or right simultaneously, a feature which is shown clearly in the chariot depictions from Putli Karar (Fig.: 408) and from Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla (Fig.: 418). In both pictures the draught animals are obviously horses.

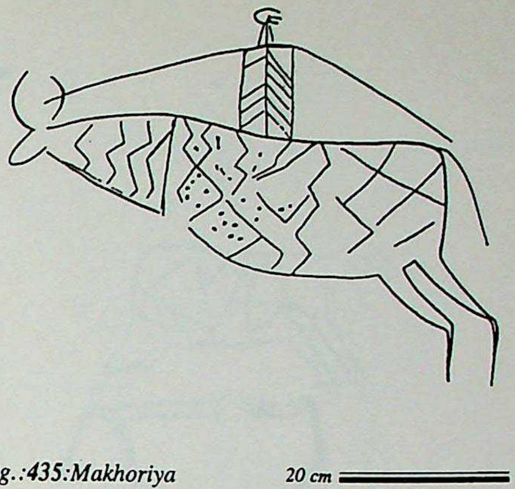


Fig.:435:Makhoriya

In the chalcolithic pictures horses not only figure as draught animals but as mounts as well, although ridden horses are very rarely depicted in chalcolithic rock pictures.

The earliest depictions of ridden animals show humped cattle ridden by a person standing at the back of the animal (Figs.: 434-8). It is likely, that these pictures show heroes or gods or transportations of souls rather than "profane" riding. One painting group from Dekan-Adarshila shows a rider, armed with an axe, riding a bull, which is followed by a chariot (Fig.: 415). Another painting at the same site shows armed figures standing on cattle (Fig.: 438).

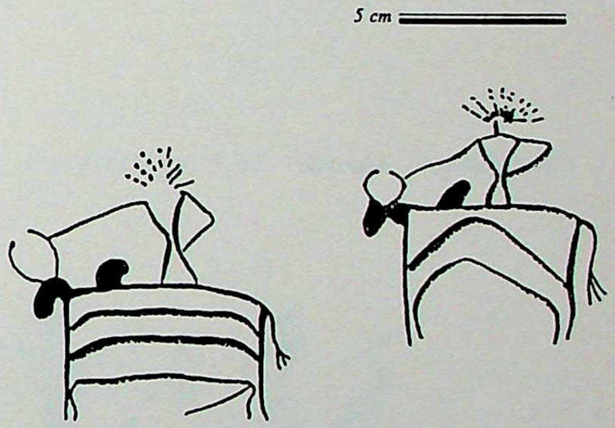
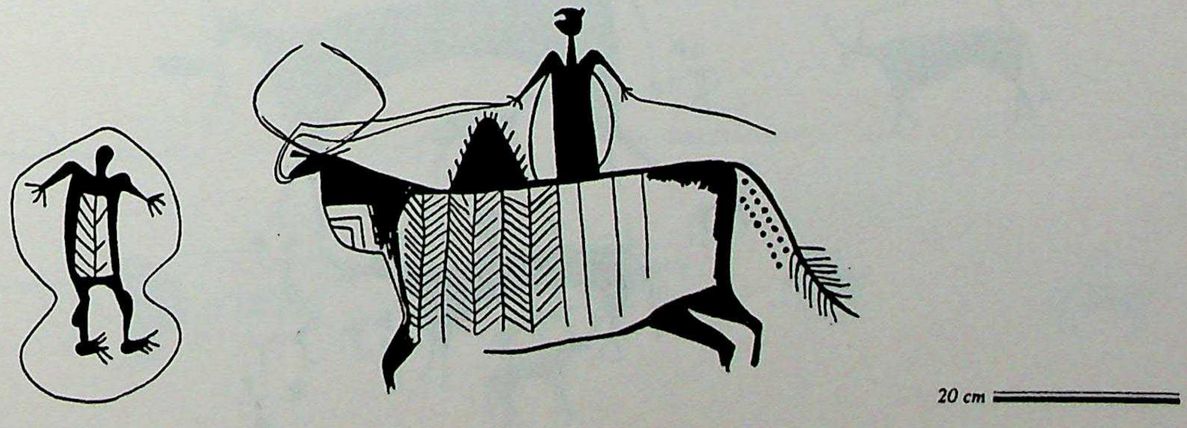
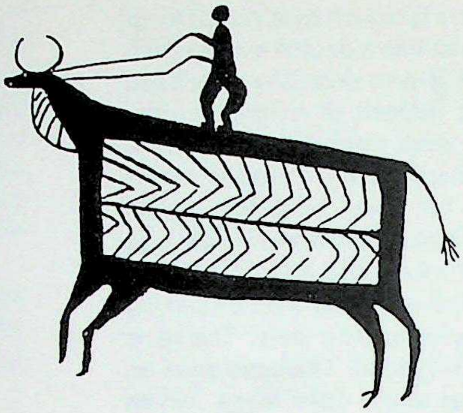


Fig.:436:Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla

Fig.:434:Firengi





10 cm

Fig.:437:Firengi

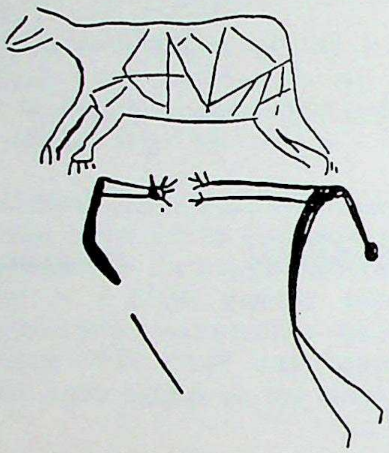
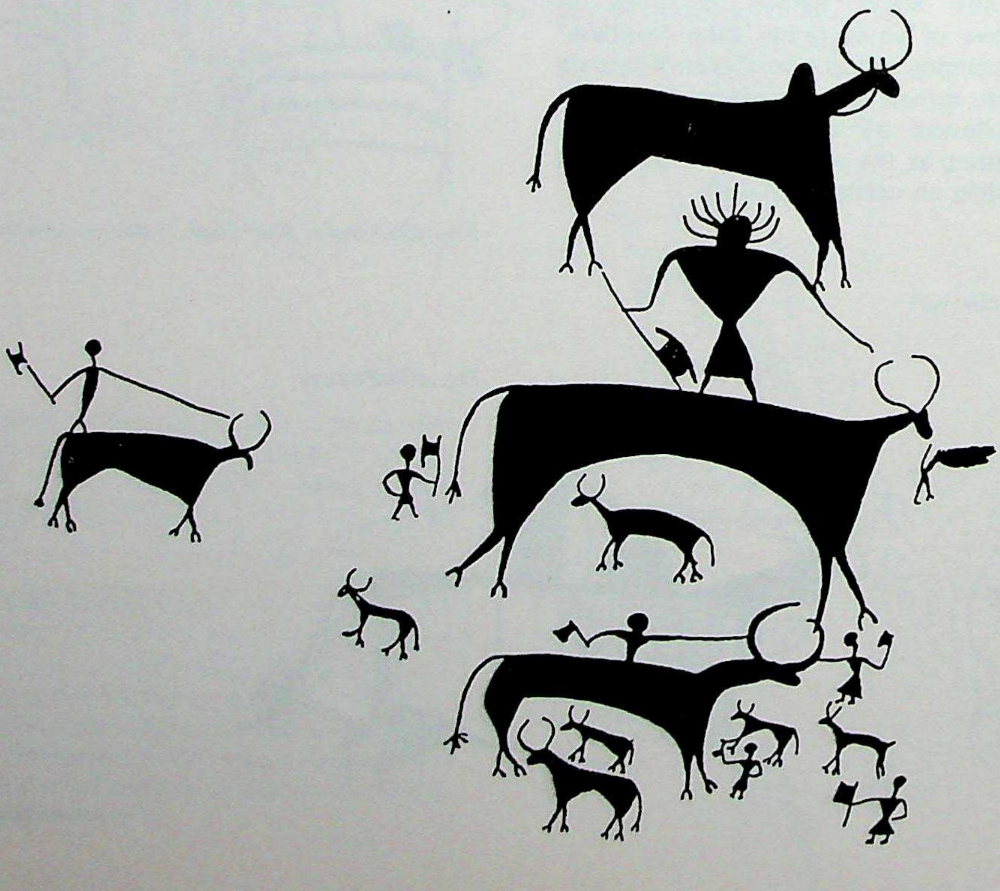


Fig.:438:Dekan - Adarshila

10 cm



The chalcolithic portrayal of horses is stylistically quite different from the portrayals of horses in the historic rock pictures. The chalcolithic horses are shown as rather small animals with a generally stubby appearance. The tail is indicated as a straight line from which individual strains of hair emanate (Figs.: 441-6), the manes are indicated at the neck as well as at the throat. As against this, the horses in the historic rock pictures are much more refined, the tail falling in long strands (Figs. 568-71). It could be that the chalcolithic horses were still closer to their wild ancestors.

Riders on horses appear contemporaneous with depictions of chariots. In several picture scenes mounted warriors can even be seen attacking chariots (Figs.: 422,425). But most of the chalcolithic depictions of horse-riders are solitary figures without scenic features. This of course makes the chronological evaluation difficult and at times questionable. Mounted warriors are mostly armed with spears, and in one case with a weapon which might be an axe (Fig.: 442).

Fig.:439:Chibbar Nulla

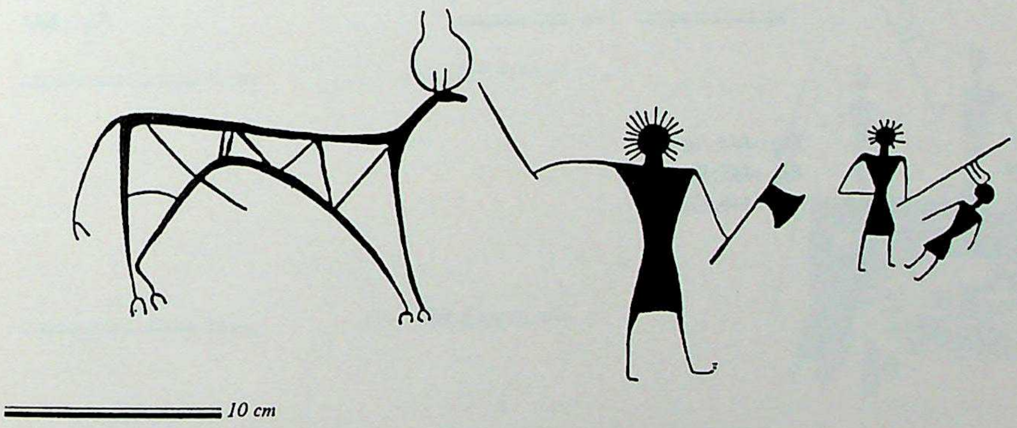
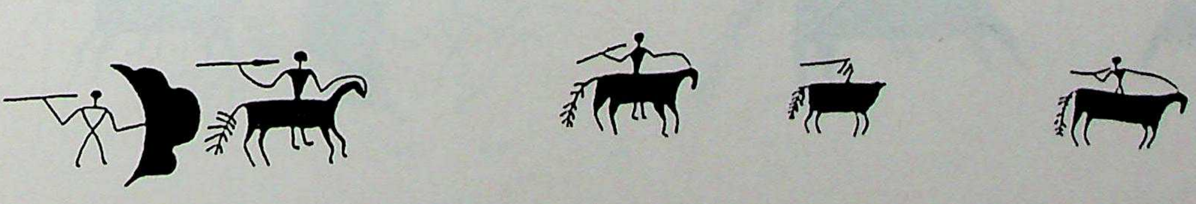
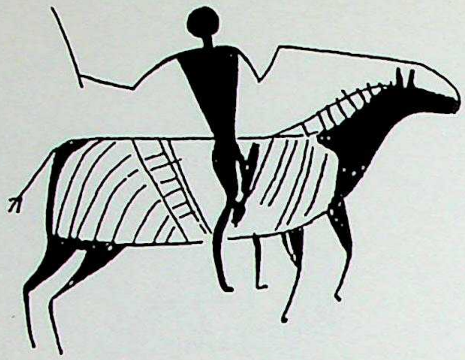


Fig.:440:Firengi





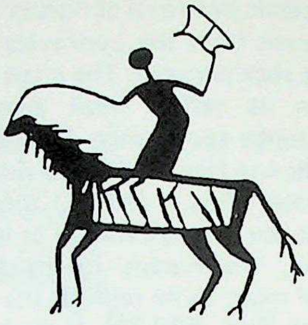
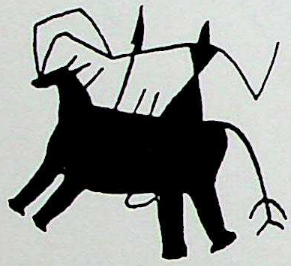


*Fig.:**441*** 5 cm *Fig.:442*



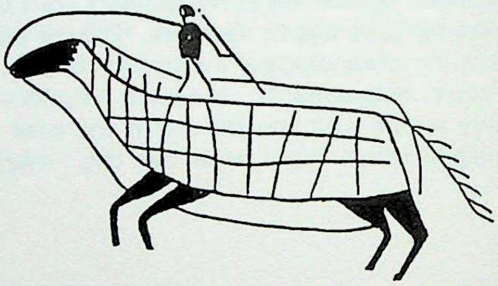
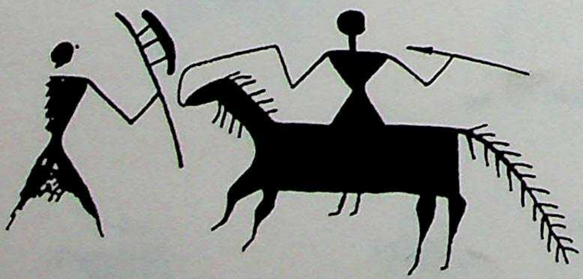
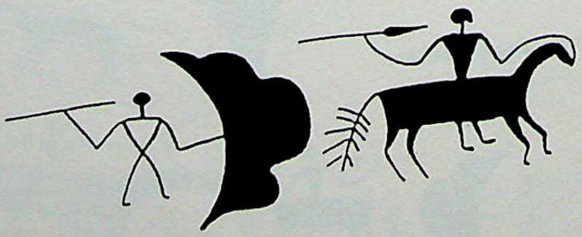


*Fig.:**443*** 5 cm *Fig.:444*

*Fig.:**441**:Urden*
*Fig.:**442**:Firengi*
*Fig.:**443**:Firengi*
*Fig.:**444**:Jaora*
*Fig.:**445**:Firengi*
*Fig.:**446**:Firengi*

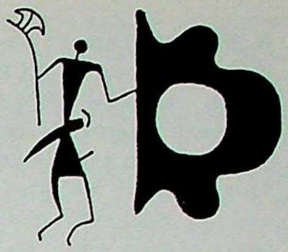
Fig.:445 5 cm *Fig.:446*

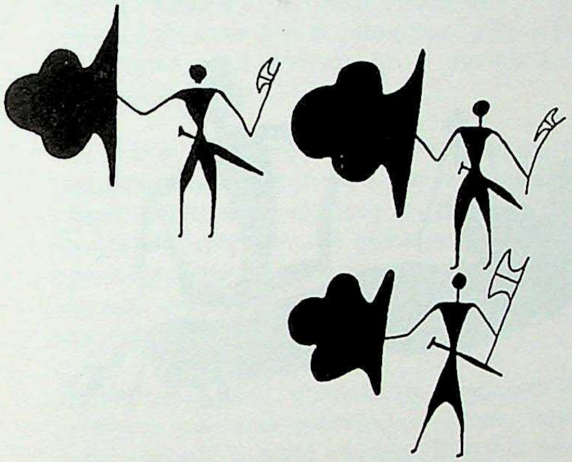




Chalcolithic paintings of elephant-riders are even more rare. The riders are generally armed with axes, and in one case the rider is girded with a sword, a weapon which only appears in the later phases of the chalcolithic art (Figs.: 447-8).

Pictures of camels are totally absent in chalcolithic rock-art. Camels are only depicted in later historic rock paintings, and even there extremely rarely (Figs.: 557,559).





10 cm *Fig.:449:Firengi*

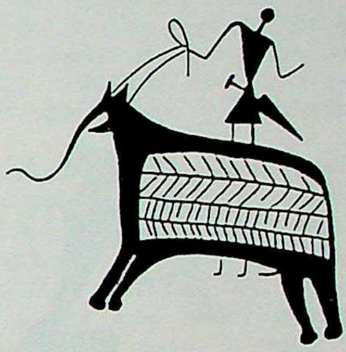


Fig.:448:Firengi 10 cm

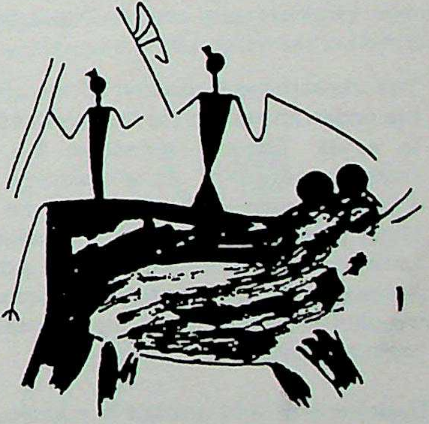
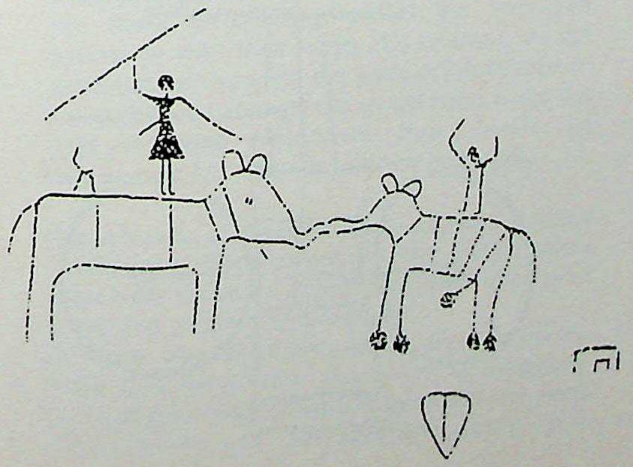


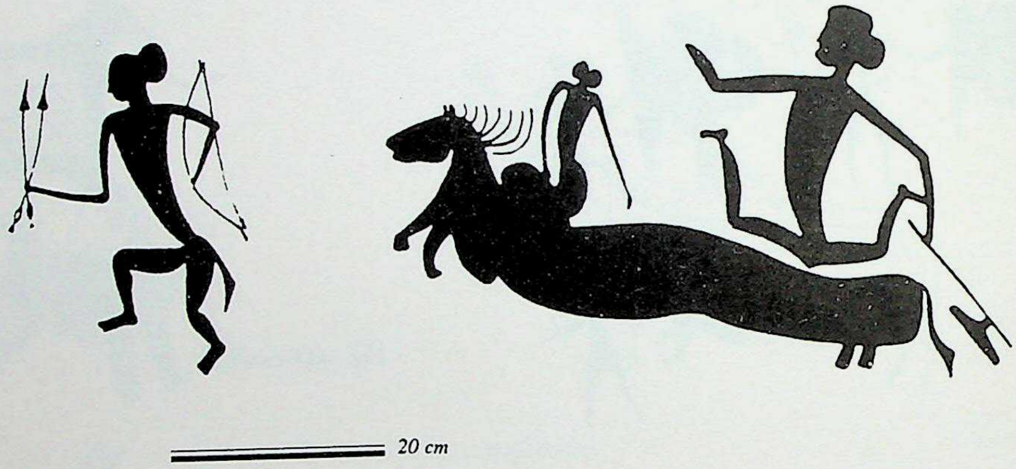
Fig.:447:Firengi 10 cm

50 cm *Fig.:450:Koppagallu*



Riding on fantastic and fabulous animals is shown frequently, but in historic pictures only. These fabulous animals are comparable to *makrama* figures which are well known from sculptures on early Buddhist sanctuaries.
These animals are often shaped like horses but with an extremely elongated body, or with a snake's body (Fig.: 451). Other animals --like huge cats-- which are draped and ridden by a person, might actually depict the *vahanas* or vehicles of gods or goddesses.

*Fig.:**451**(from Fig.:682):Mahadeo Hills - Agamdwar*



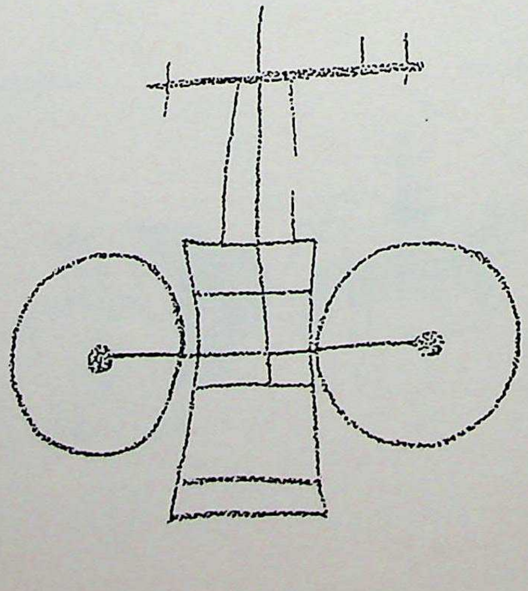
The chronological position of the chariots and the ridden animals in the rock pictures is difficult to asses. Chariots appear in the very first stylistic groups of these paintings in which domesticated animals appear for the first time. These pictures are stylistically different from the earlier pictures of the hunters and gatherers.
Although microlith-barbed weapons are still frequent in these pictures, metallic weapons also begin to appear more frequently.

Depictions of wild animals in numerous hunting scenes are still a common theme in these pictures but the central importance of the humped cattle can hardly be overlooked. In the Southern Deccan this thematic focus is even more pronounced, since humped cattle are practically the sole theme of the rock bruisings there.

On account of miniature clay cart frames which were found in excavations of Harappan sites, we know that wheeled vehicles were in use already in the third millennium B.C., but the construction features of these are basically different from the construction of the carts depicted in the rock pictures.

The clay carts consist of a rectangular frame which is connected by the central pole-shaft with the yoke of the animals, while the carts in rock-art consist of triangular frames, whose pointed angle rides on the yoke (Figs.: 411,416,431). Only a single depiction of a cart from Koppagallu is comparable to the miniature carts found in the Harappan region (Fig.: 452).

*Fig.:**452**:Koppagallu*



From Inamgaon, a chalcolithic site in Maharashtra, stems a graffiti on a storage jar showing a bullock cart (Fig.: 431). The vessel was found in an excavation, and has been dated to 1 300 B.C. (Allchin,B. & Allchin,R., 1982:282, Fig. 10.17). The construction of this cart is practically identical with the carts depicted in rock-art. The similarity of technical details from the chariot depictions in rock paintings with technical details from the bronze chariot of Daimabad has already been mentioned.

We do not know if the people who depicted the chariots actually used them themselves or only reflected the inventory of "strangers" with whom they came into contact of a symbiotic or antagonistic nature.

The rather awkward portrayal of horses, the inaccurate rendering of technical features in the chariot depiction, and above all, the scarcity of chariot depictions in the numerous chalcolithic paintings indicate that horse-riding and the use of chariots were features which the painters only observed but did not use themselves.

On the other hand, chariots are integrated into extensive narrative procession scenes, whose cultic content is quite obvious. But this would mean that the chariot had a fixed place in the cult practice of these people who produced the pictures, if we do not consider the possibility that even these scenes are only reflections of activities of "strangers"observed by the rock painters.

With all these contradictory possibilities, I believe that the chariot pictures as well as the horse-riding and fighting scenes show contact situations between the autochthonous agricultural population and people of a different social organization and different technical equipment. It is possible that specialized cattle breeders moved into these peripheral areas of the Harappan civilization with their herds and chariots, at the same time maintaining the trade infrastructure in the exchange between the urban culture and the vast economic hinterlands from which the Harappan culture derived its raw materials.

The influence of these nomadic peoples or tribes on the social fabric of the incipient agriculturists must have caused a radical change in their own social and cultural organizations.

In those picture groups which show chariots, there is a remarkable dichotomy of weapons. While chariot-related warriors generally use metal intensive weapons --like axes and spears-- their antagonists are only armed with bow and arrow. In later fighting scenes swords and shields make their appearance, and here again, the warriors possessing these weapons are fighting alongside the chariots, or they are horse-riders or elephant riders. It is not clear if we see here a social stratification of warriors of a single society, or the technologically unequally equipped soldiers of different populations.

But it would be going too far to interpret these pictures as portrayals of poorly equipped aborigines (the indigenous tribes), who battle invading warriors (the Aryans) fighting from chariots and horseback with metal weapons (Kosambi,D., 1962:26). Prehistoric evidence hardly ever comes in such clear-cut form.

War chariots are almost exclusively depicted in chalcolithic paintings only. In the historic rock pictures chariots are extremely rare (Figs. 453-4), (Allchin,B., 1985:153-5, Pl. M a & b; Silberrand,G.A., 1907:567-70). This is in contrast to the role which chariots and chariot-troops are given in early historic literature. Chariots were one of the four divisions of a standing army. And Kautilya's Arthashastra lists different types of chariots and their use (Sharma Sastry,R., 1967:159). Chariots are depicted frequently in early Buddhist reliefs; some of the earliest and best examples come from the architraves of the gateways in Sanchi.

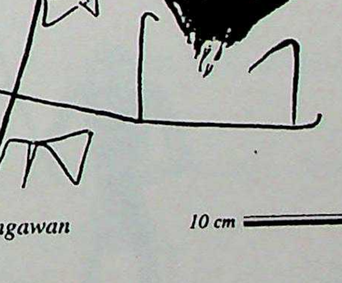
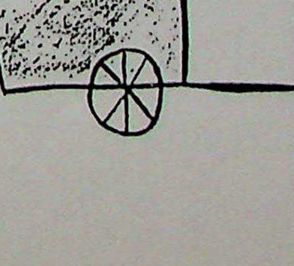


Fig.:453:Bangawan 10 cm

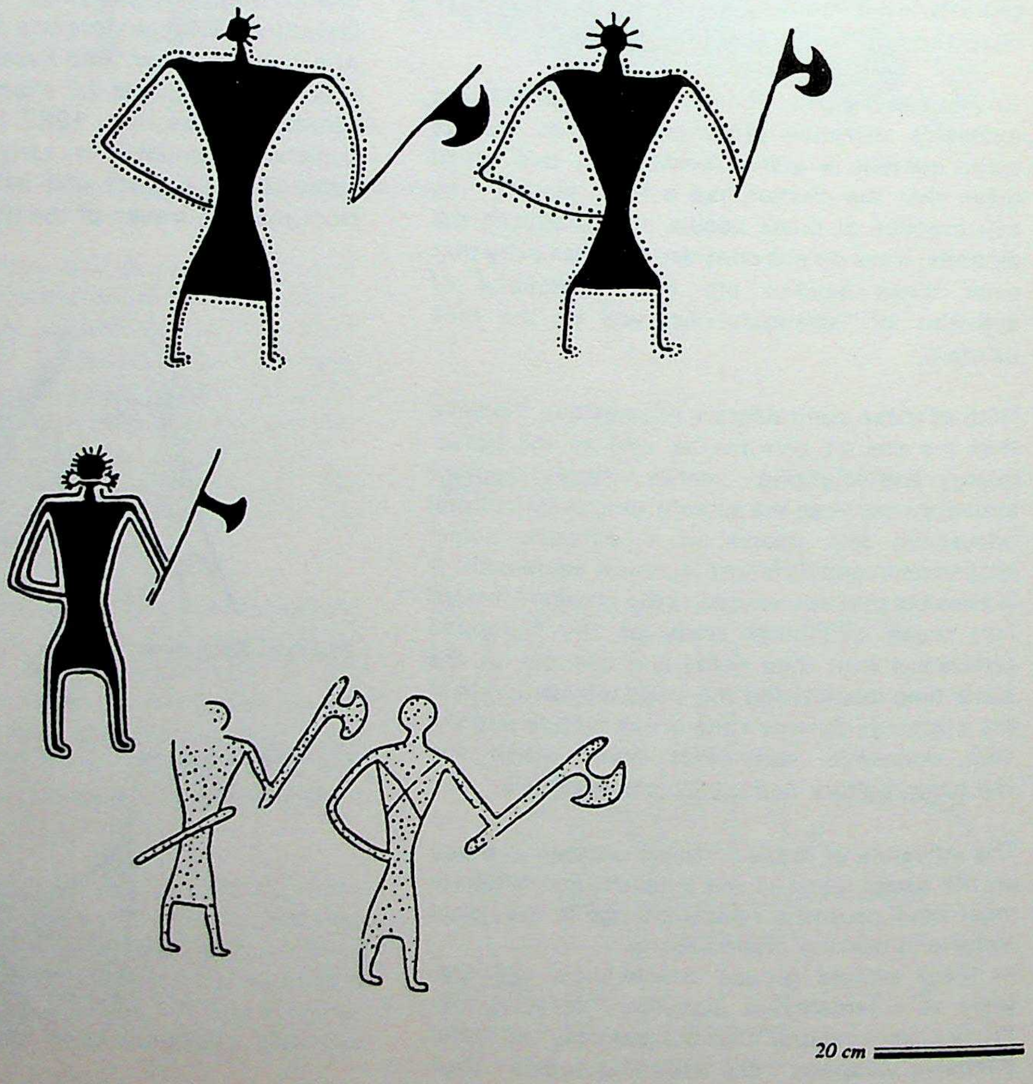
Fig.:454:Bangawan 10 cm



Riding appears in the rock paintings simultaneously with depictions of yoked cattle. Horses in the chalcolithic rock-art are depicted either yoked or ridden, they are never shown herded, as cattle frequently are. I take this for a further indication that horses were not bred by the authors of the pictures.

I believe that the rare chariot depictions and depictions of riders in the chalcolithic rock-art mirror a contact situation in the peripheral regions of the Harappan culture area. The two-wheeled vehicles do not cause so much of a chronological problem in this hypothetical scenario, as the introduction of the horse as a draught animal and mount does. Horses are archaeologically verified in subcontinental India only around 1 000 B.C. In the rock pictures riding on horses appears contemporary with the use of microlith barbed weapons, as well as with flanged axe-types, which are reminiscent of axes from the copper hoards (Fig.: 455). This would point towards an introduction of the horse as beast of burden in Western and Central India in the early second millennium B.C.

Fig.:455:Chibbar Nulla



The rock paintings of the northern Vindhya Region --above all, in the Mirzapur District of Uttar Pradesh-- show clear stylistic and thematic variations which cannot be explained away as just another local stylistic variant. The region of the Northern Vindhyas, comprising the escarpments towards the wide Gangetic Plains, the river valleys of the Belan and the Son and many other river courses, are areas where revolutionary transformations of subsistence strategies took place very early.

From these regions come some of the earliest finds of cultivated rice (Misra,V.D., 1977:109), indications of early domestication of goats and sheep (Sharma,G.R. et al., 1980:75), the early use of pottery, and many other signs of a settled life-style of peoples who already, as hunters and gatherers, could rely on a large spectrum of resources, which enabled a round-the-year exploitation from a permanent place of settlement.

The unique stylistic expression of the pictures of the hunters and gatherers of this region as compared to those further west in the Vindhya Hills has already been referred to earlier. The paintings in the northern Vindhyas are not as numerous, nor do we see so many overlaying painting strata as in the western Vindhya Hills. Here we also miss the extensive narrative groups which gave such a minute description of implements and weapons.

Still, we can conclude that the paintings of the hunters and gatherers in the Northern Vindhyas, although stylistically related to the paintings of the early agriculturists, do not show innovations and technologies as we know them from chalcolithic pictures further west.

Metal weapons and ridden animals are rarely found in the pictures of the Northern Vindhya Mountains, and the few pictures that exist, can hardly be distinguished from early historic paintings (Figs.: 456-9). In several of these pictures wild animals can be seen provided with a hump (Fig.: 456).

On account of the scarcity of the pictures, there is not much scope for search into the weapons' shapes. There are a few pictures showing flanged arrow and spear heads, and a few persons obviously girded with swords (Figs. 457-8). Riders are rare in these pictures (Fig.: 458), and the species of the mount is impossible to understand.

Besides flanged spear and arrow heads, barbed weapons are shown as well (Fig.: 457), which obviously indicate the continuous use of microliths.

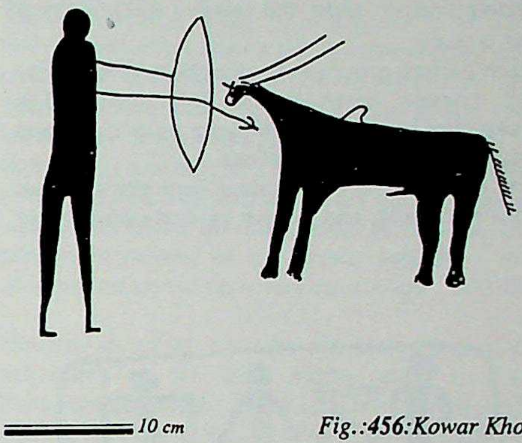


Fig.:456:Kowar Khoh

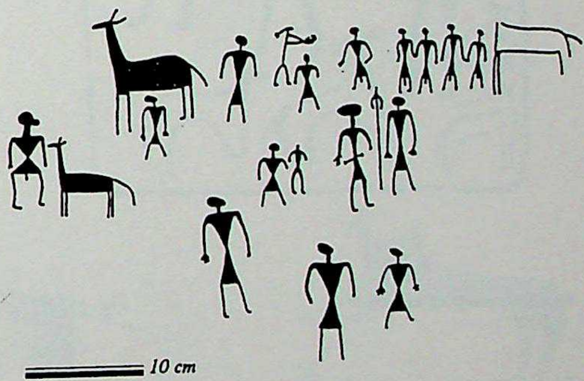
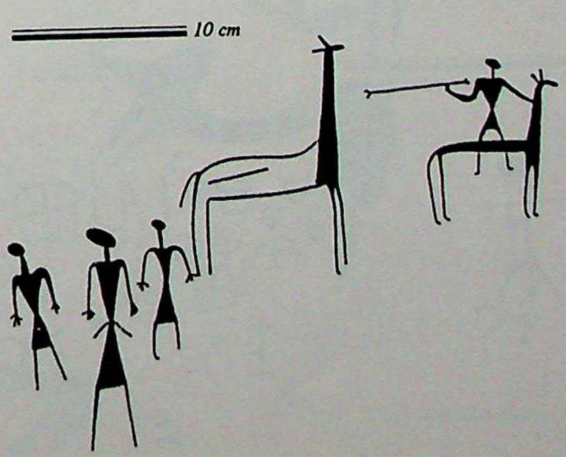


Fig.:457:Robertsganj - Janaiman

Fig.:458:Robertsganj - Janaiman



While analysing the pictures from the northern parts of the Vindhyas, we have to realize that the understanding of stylistic analogies or irregularities is very much a subjective undertaking. Many figures or limited groups are isolated depictions, without any further clues for understanding even the relative chronology of the picture.

Many picture groups in the Northern Vindhyas do not convey technological information. The researcher can only work along associative and subjective stylistic guidelines.

One of these very indicative depictions comes from Kandakot, and shows several persons and animals placed inside a vignette-like frame (Fig.: 459). The stylization, particularly of the animals, corresponds well with animal-designs from chalcolithic pottery, but also with stylized pictures of animals from chalcolithic rock paintings in Central India.

The following stylistic group, to be found in the rock pictures of the Mirzapur District, contains several panels of script-like symbols. Several of the "letters" seem to be taken out of the Asokan-Brahmi script, which also fixes the time horizon for these pictures around the beginning of our time (Figs.: 460-2).

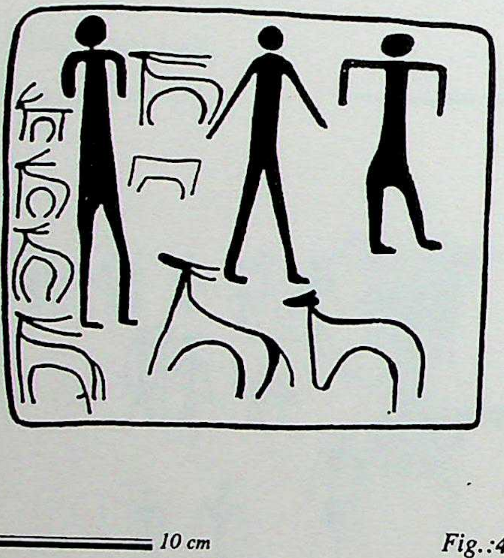


Fig.:459

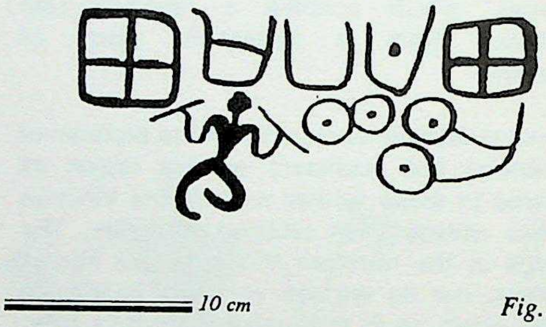


Fig.:460

Fig.:461

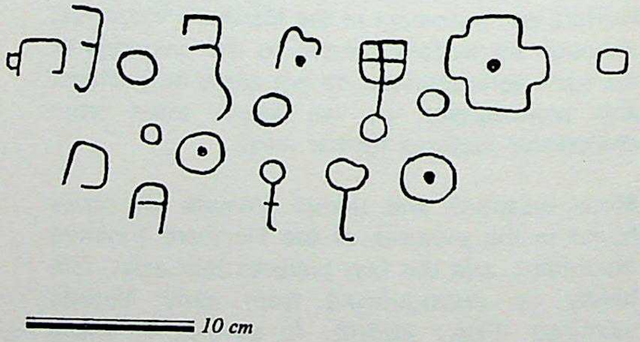
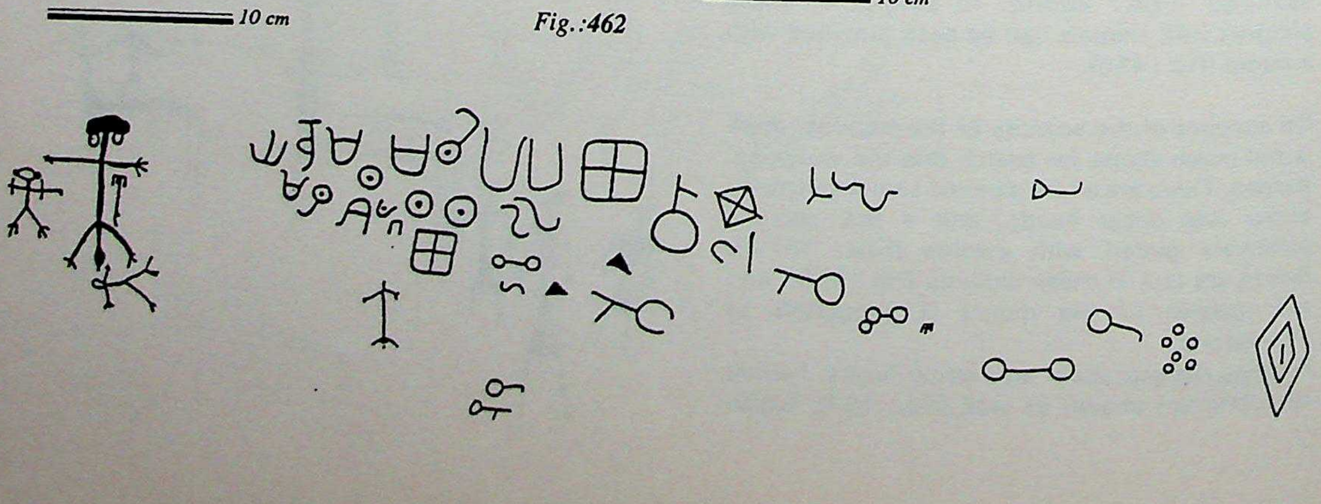


Fig.:459:Robertsganj - Kandakot
Fig.:460:Robertsganj - Panchmukhi Romp
Fig.:461:Robertsganj - Panchmukhi Romp
Fig.:462:Robertsganj - Panchmukhi Romp

Fig.:462



Another region particularly rich in pictures of the early farming and cattle-keeping communities, lies in the granite regions of the Southern Deccan. Here, tens of thousands of rock bruisings represent the pictorial remains of the neolithic and chalcolithic communities.

Not only are rock bruisings to be found here, but also a good number of rock paintings, which are important for the verification of stratigraphic positions of particular style groups. The stylistic relations of the early rock paintings and the early rock bruisings of the agriculturists and cattle-keepers are obvious, and can be best seen from the similarity of the very elegant depictions of long-horned bulls.

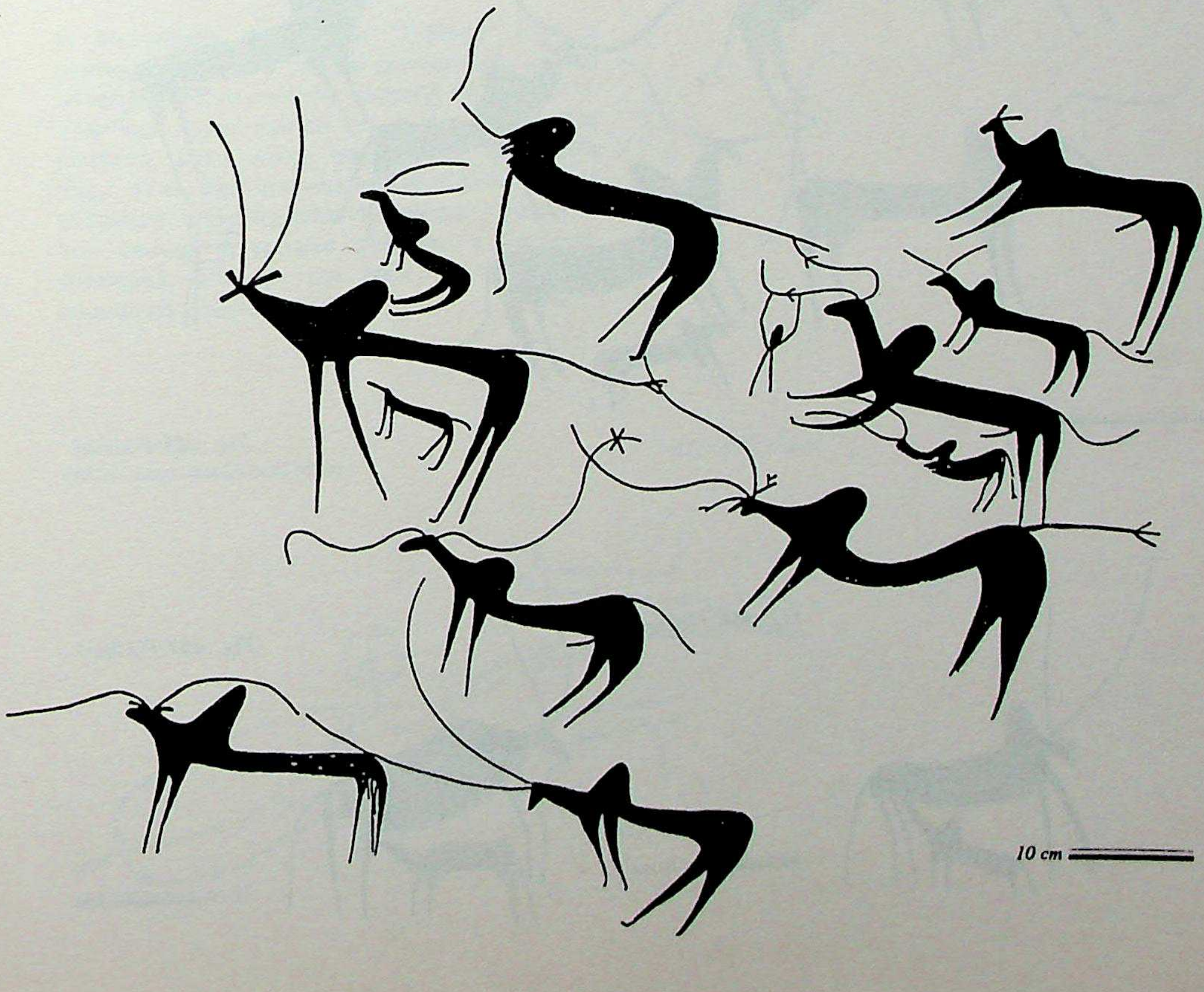
The thematic analysis of these pictures is more frustrating, since they hardly show anything but figures of humped cattle, and rarely figures of other animals. There are hardly any narrative scenes, and even in these, the only subject of the pictures is cattle.

It seems that cattle were the axis around which the world of these neolithic people turned.

Depictions of steers with wide outloading horns are grouped as in stampedes; in between nothing else seems to haver found a place. Rarely are cows and calves depicted (Figs.: 463-5,466-7). And even more rare are figures of humans. A few of these stampedes show diminutive human figures carrying axes. On the form of the humans the artist seems not to have wasted any degree of sophistication. Sometimes they are seen clambering on the horns of the steers, and in one instance holding to a rope which is fastened at one end to a bull (Fig.: 464). Several of the steers have decorations on the horn ends, which also could be interpreted as natural and consistent fraying of the horns, indicating the steers to be particularly ferocious (Figs.: 463-4).

Pictures, in which persons are seen clinging to the horns of the bulls might relate to soul transportation myths, as already mentioned while dealing with the bull depictions from the Chambal Valley and elsewhere (Fig.: 363-4,463-4).

Fig.:463:Piklihal



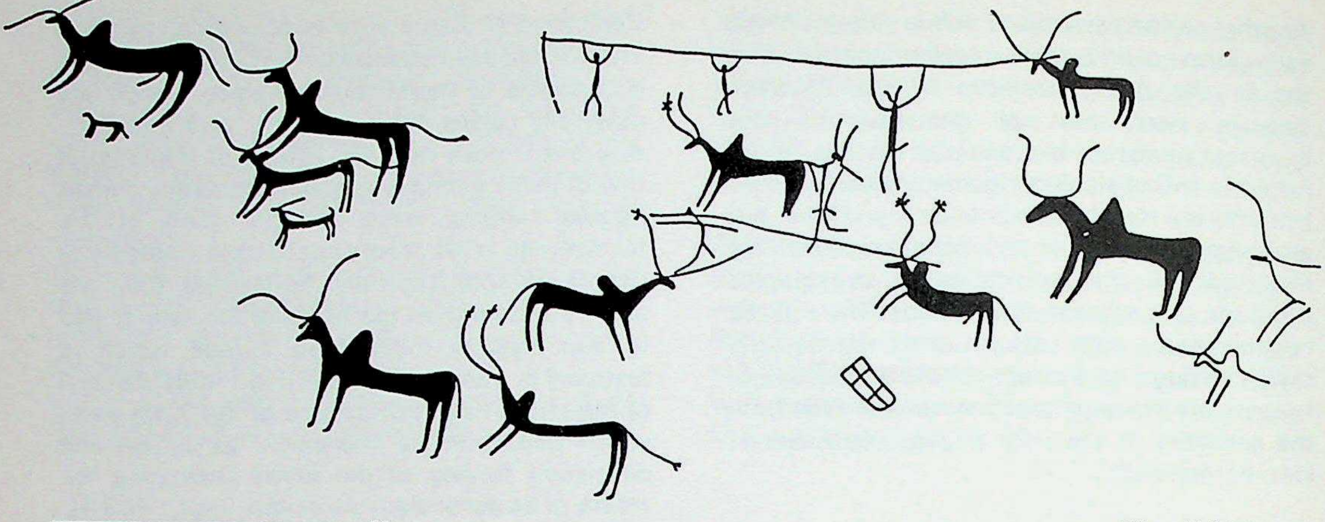


Fig.:464:Piklihal

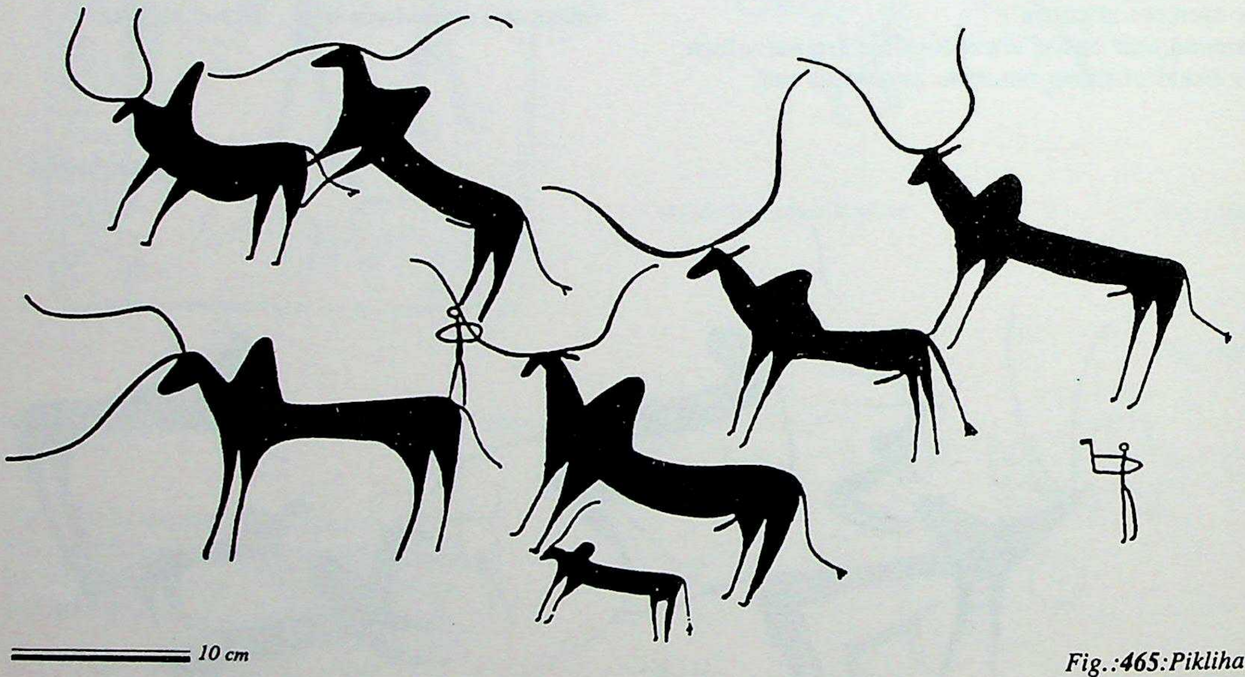


Fig.:465:Piklihal

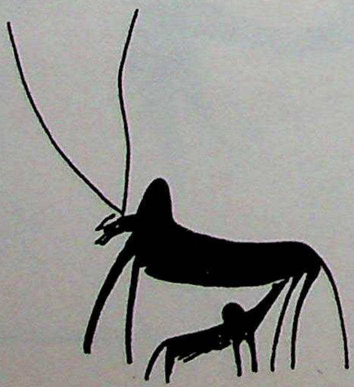


Fig.:466:Piklihal

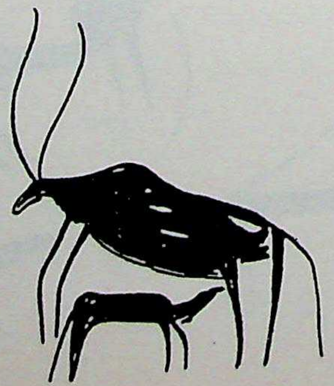


Fig.:467:Piklihal

Yoked cattle are rarely depicted in the pictures of the Southern Deccan (Figs.: 468-9). The bruising of a two-wheeled chariot, pulled by two cattle, which was found in Maski in the Raichur District of Karnataka (Fig.: 468), is comparable to chariot depictions from Central India. The only other comparable depiction of a chariot comes from Badami-Hiregudda (Figs.: 469), although in this depiction the species of the draught animals cannot be made out.

The importance of cattle in the rock pictures of the Southern Deccan is documented in pictures where cattle take the position of an icon. One example from Koppagallu shows four bulls arrayed at the periphery of a circle (Fig.: 471). Other pictures show bulls placed onto a T-shaped pedestal (Figs.: 472-5). These icons are found not only at Koppagallu (Fig.: 472) but also from the Moissailana Guddu, close to the ruins of Vijayanagar (Fig.: 474) and from Chintakunta in the Cuddapah District of Andhra Pradesh (Fig.: 473).
In Koppagallu this icon is bruised at a lithophon. The T-shaped stand is bruised in between the horns of a large bull which is bruised into the centre of this triangular stone (Fig.: 475).

In Moisaillana Gudda the "T-Stand" icon is painted in red on a vertical granite rock, around which extensive neolithic deposits can be found. The icon here stands on a more elaborate platform under which honeycombs are visible (Fig.: 474). The bruising in Koppagallu is more extensive, showing around a central figure of a bull several ithyphallic persons, a peacock, antelopes, and on the back of the bull a copulating couple.

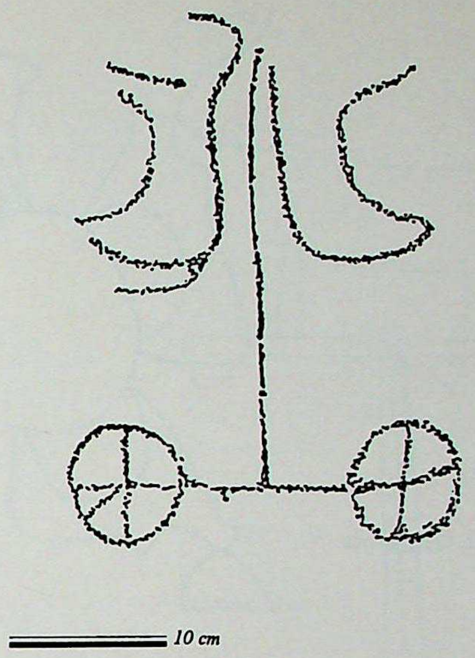
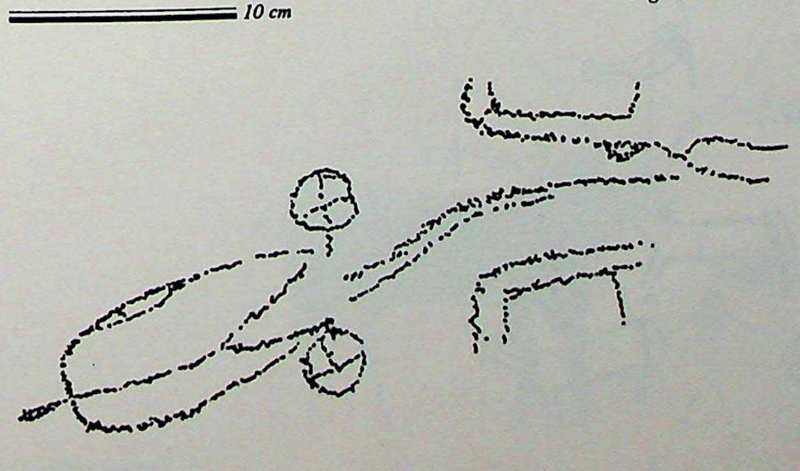


Fig.:469:Badami - Hiregudda

Fig.:468:Maski



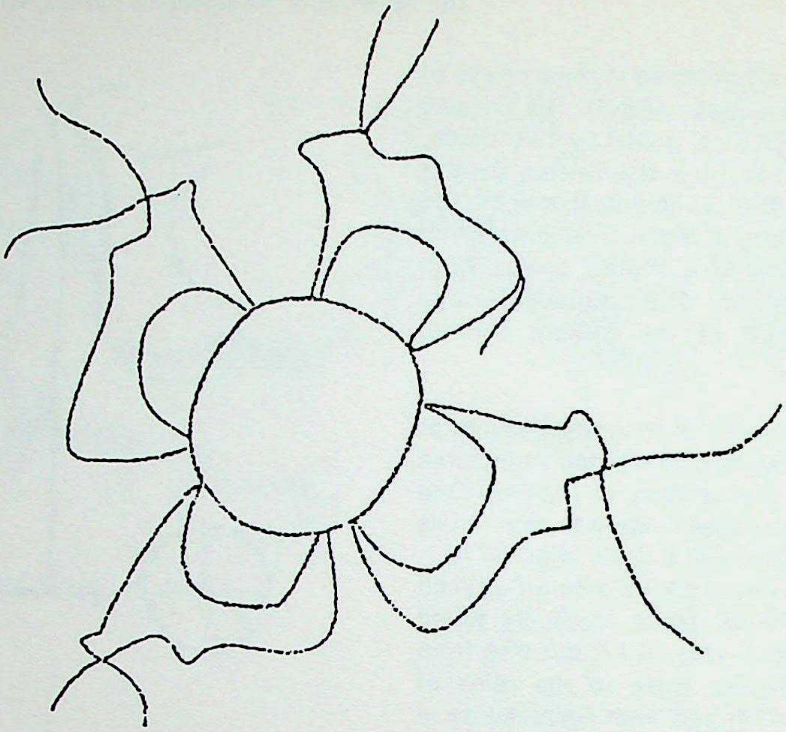


Fig.:471:Koppagallu

10 cm

10 cm

Fig.:470:Ketavaram

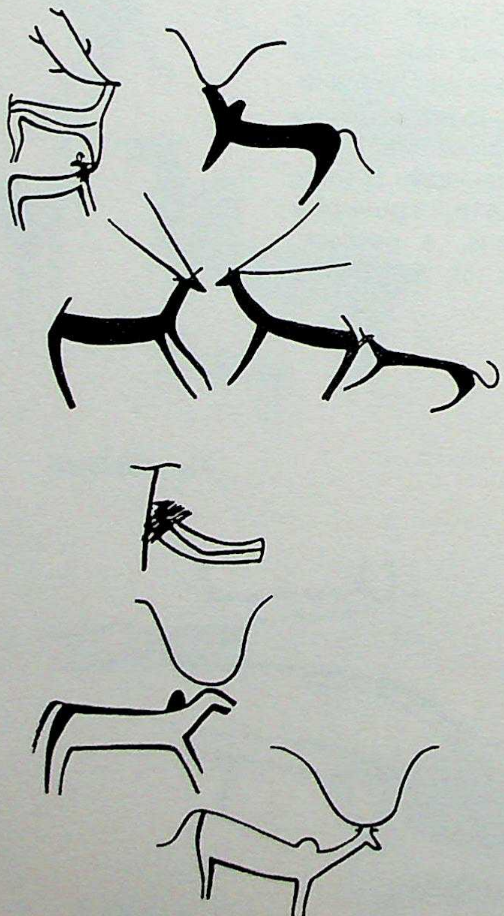


Fig.:472

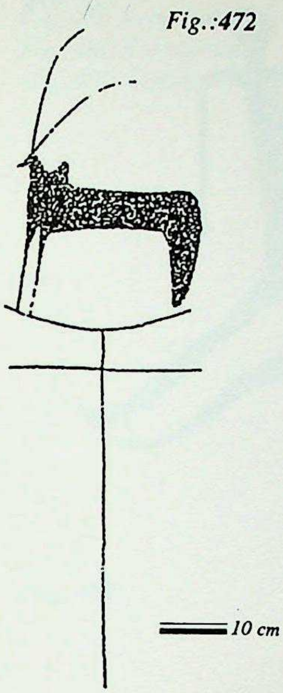


Fig.:473

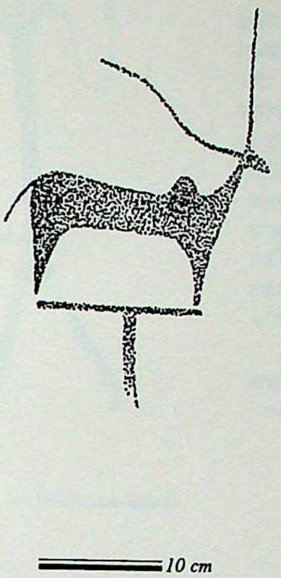


Fig.:474

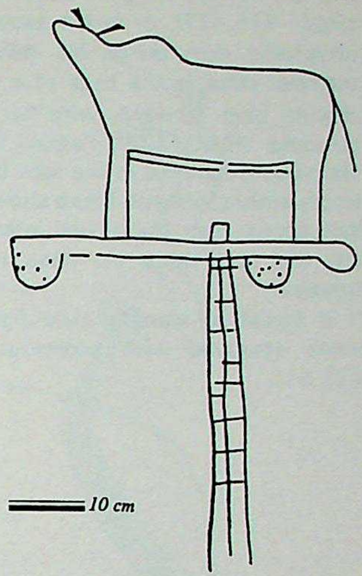
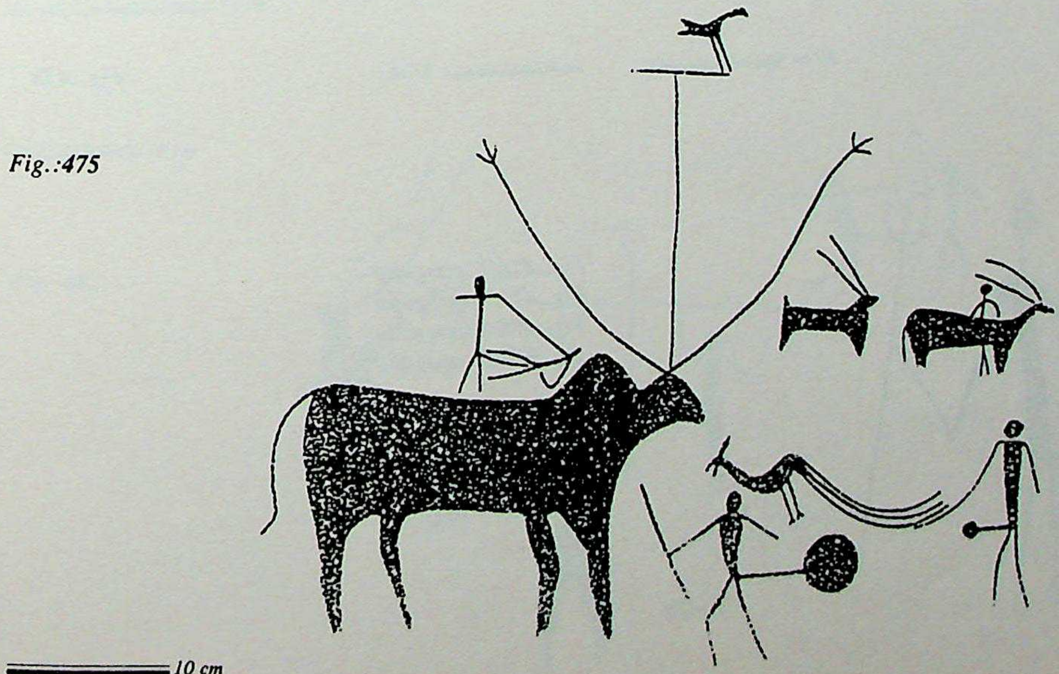


Fig.:472:Koppagallu
Fig.:473:Chintakunta
Fig.:474:Hampi - Moissaillana Gudda
Fig.:475:Koppagallu

Fig.:475



In Koppagallu there are several obviously heterosexual intercourse scenes, which show different positions. The ithyphallic male standing and the female lying vertically with legs apart (Figs.: 475,477), or in the second version, the ithyphallic man brings his rather exaggerated member close to the back of a woman, who is slightly bent forward, with her hands on her buttocks (Figs.: 478). Female figures are not identified otherwise in the rock bruisings. Not a single anthropomorph figure shows breasts. The indications from the sexual intercourse scenes are the only ones we have to identify the females.

It is easier to identify male figures, who are times equipped with enormous phalli (Figs.: 475-81).

Fig.:476

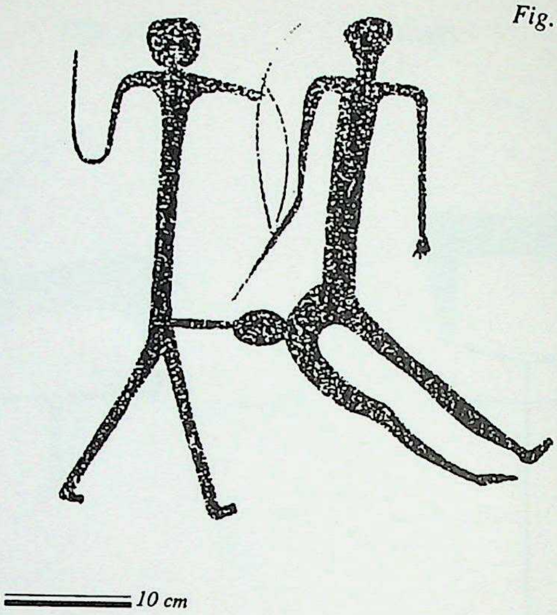
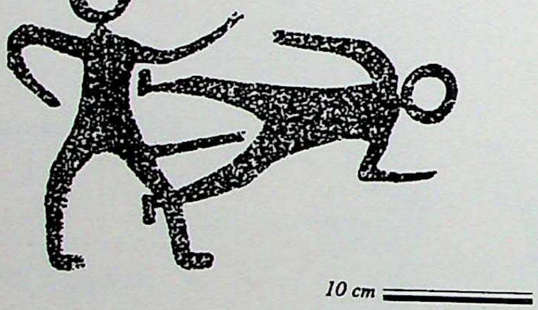


Fig.:477



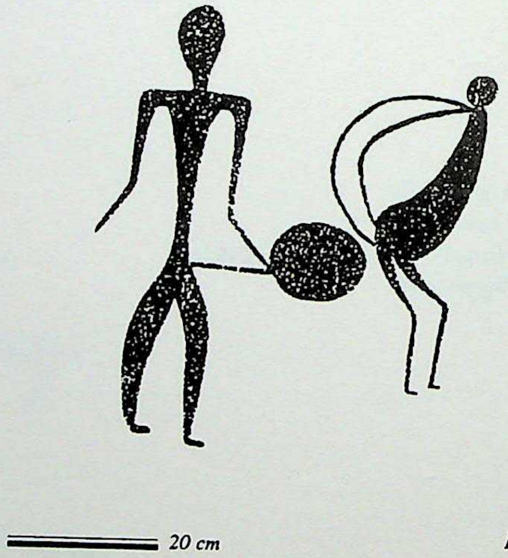


Fig.:478

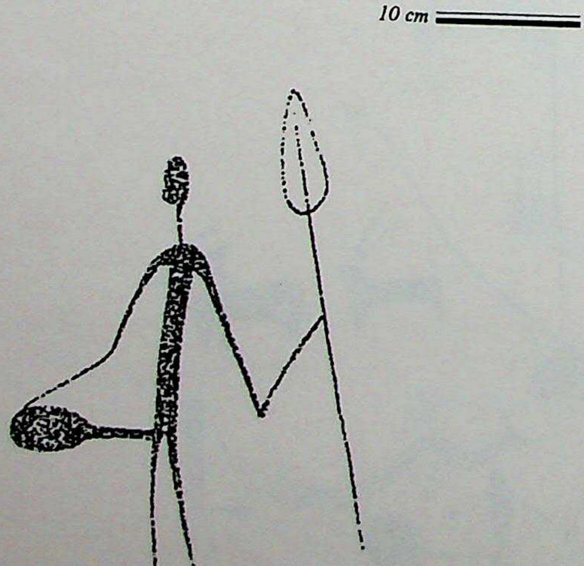
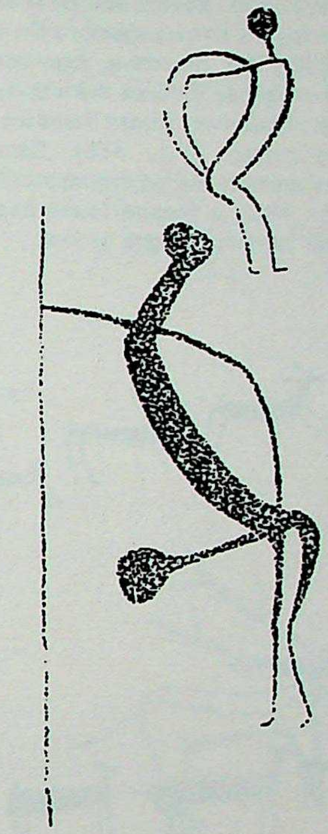


Fig.:479

Fig.:476:Koppagallu
Fig.:477:Koppagallu
Fig.:478:Koppagallu
Fig.:479:Koppagallu

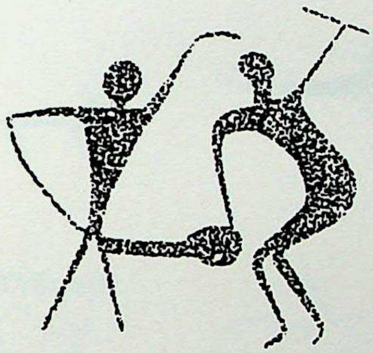
*Fig.:**480**:Koppagallu*
*Fig.:**481**:Koppagallu*
*Fig.:**482**:Koppagallu*

Fig.:481



10 cm

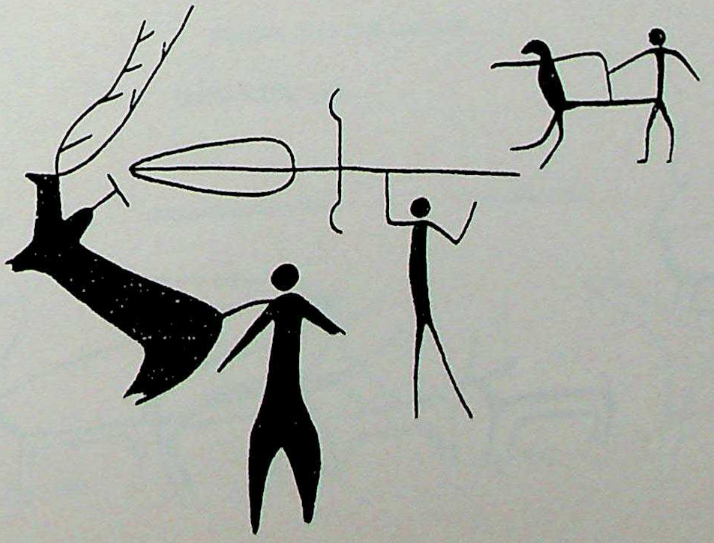
Fig.:480



10 cm

20 cm

Fig.:482



Besides cattle, whose degree of domestication is difficult to understand from the pictures, there are a number of depictions of wild animals (Figs.: 483-92). These animals are often drawn in files, arrayed like a herd of cattle, a feature which they share with the chalcolithic animal pictures from Central India. Several scenes show a single hunter aiming his arrows against a file of animals (Fig.: 483). The repetitive depiction of the animals sometimes reduces them to designs, as in a group of gazelles, whose horns are joined to a zig-zag pattern (Fig.: 485). Common are pictures of animals placed symmetrically head to head (Fig.: 486), a feature found frequently in chalcolithic pottery-designs as well.

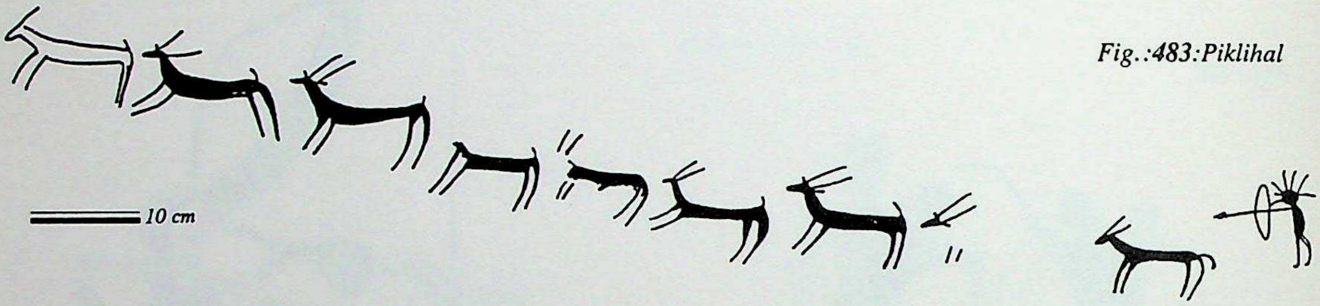


Fig.:483:Piklihal

Fig.:484:Piklihal

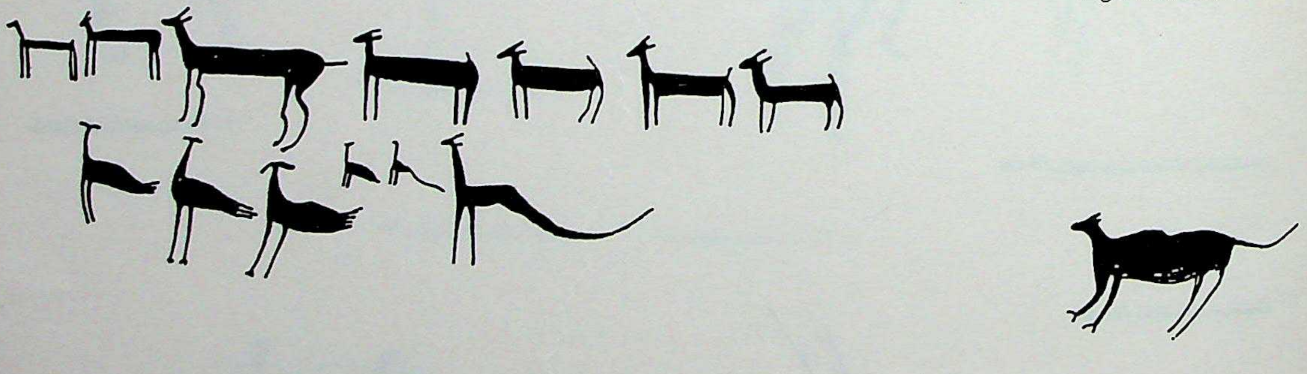


Fig.:485:Piklihal

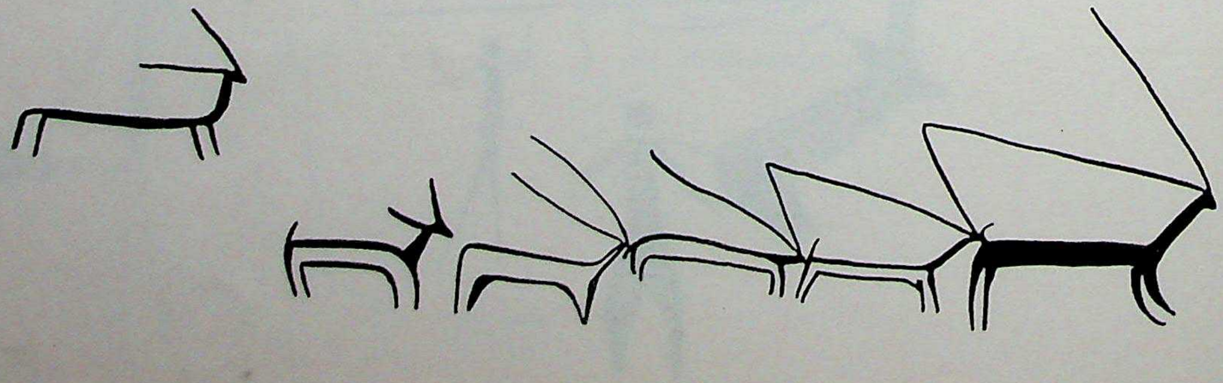


Fig.:486:Ketavaram
Fig.:487:Ketavaram
Fig.:488:Koppagallu
Fig.:489:Ketavaram
Fig.:490:Ketavaram
Fig.:491:Ketavaram
Fig.:492:Koppagallu

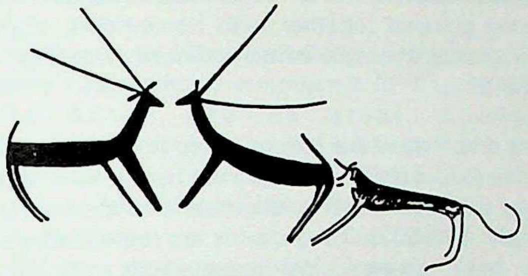


Fig.:486

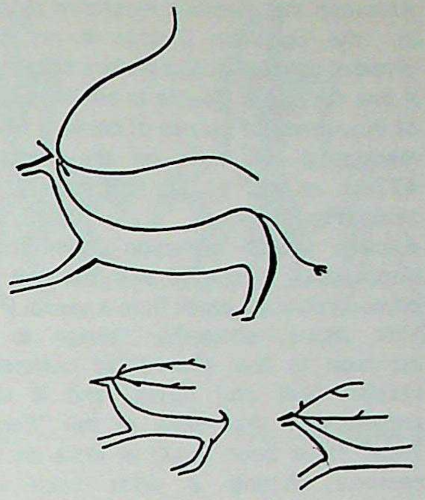


Fig.:487

Fig.:488

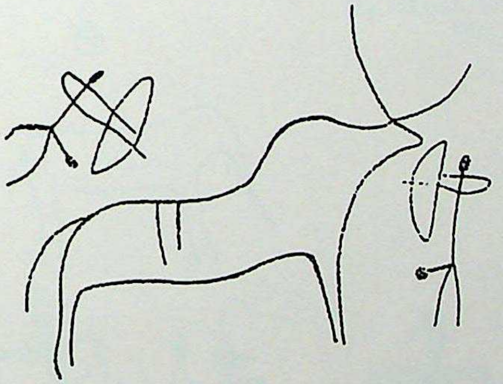
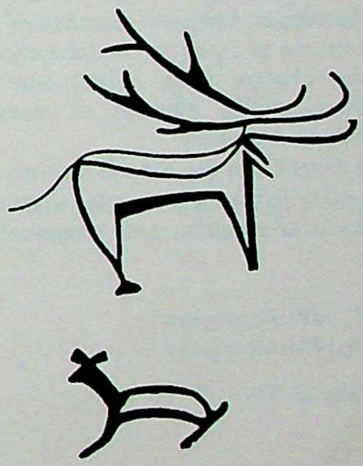


Fig.:489



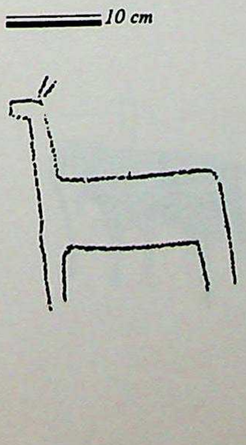


Fig.:490

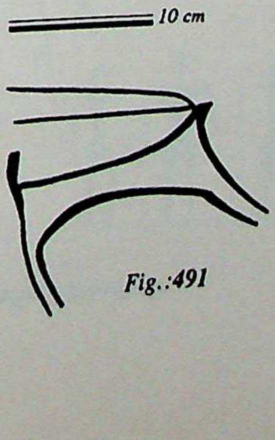


Fig.:491

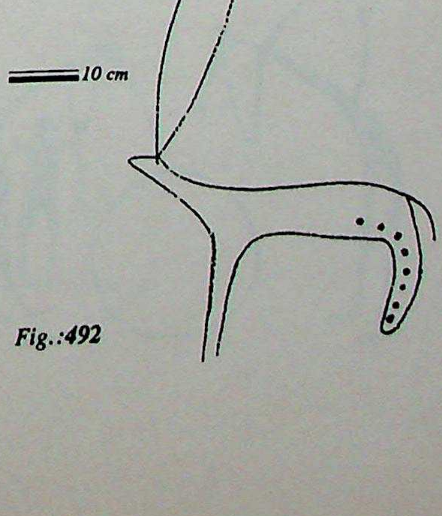


Fig.:492

Although the thematic repertoire of the rock-art in the Southern Deccan is not particularly diverse, several unique picture scenes are found if one takes the trouble to sift through the tens of thousands of figures of cattle. I have already mentioned the bulls on the T-stand (Figs.: 472-5), as well as the four bulls arrayed in a circle (Fig.: 471).

Another unique depiction again comes from Koppagallu. It shows two persons obviously drinking through pipes from a vessel (Fig.: 493). This theme, altogether foreign to India, is common in the chalcolithic cultures of the Persian Gulf and Egypt, and it should be remembered that seals of the "Persian Gulf Type" have been found in India showing two persons sharing a drink from a vessel (Buchanan,B., 1979:145-7,Fig.16/1-2; Bibby,G., 1969:409, Fig.92). Since these seals belong to the early second millennium B.C. we might have here an indication of a date for these engravings.

It is not possible to build up a relative chronology with bruisings, since it is impossible to distinguish between successive pictures. Most pictures show cattle, and the style of these does not change in a radical way, so that the chronological position of many figures will remain unknown.

It seems that the extremely lively bull depictions belong to the earliest style, while cattle figures of the later styles become progressively stiff.

Horse-riders are not depicted in the earliest pictures, but several depictions of elephants -- ridden and unridden-- document that the concept of riding was known (Fig.: 494).

Riders on horses are common in the later picture groups, their arms now consisting of metal weapons like swords, spears and axes (Figs.: 498-502). Several large picture groups of this period show herds of cattle and wild animals being grouped together with horse-riders, dogs and groups of people with interlinked arms (Figs.: 499-500).

The draperies of the horses is shown without any discernible detail. The reins held by the rider lead over the head towards the muzzle of the animal (Figs.: 498-502). The pictures are too schematic to base chronological conclusions on this convention, particularly since at least one picture is known which shows the reins across the neck of the animal towards the muzzle, suggesting the use of a bit (Fig.: 502).

The flanged form of the axes can be compared to axes found in megalithic graves (Fig.: 500), (Krishna Sastry,V.V., 1983:Fig,5).

Fig.:493:Koppagallu
Fig.:494:Koppagallu

Fig.:493

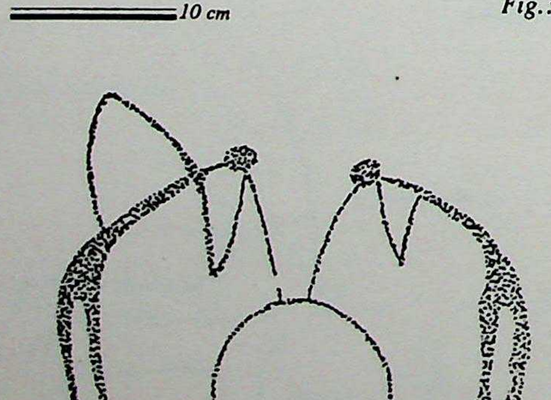
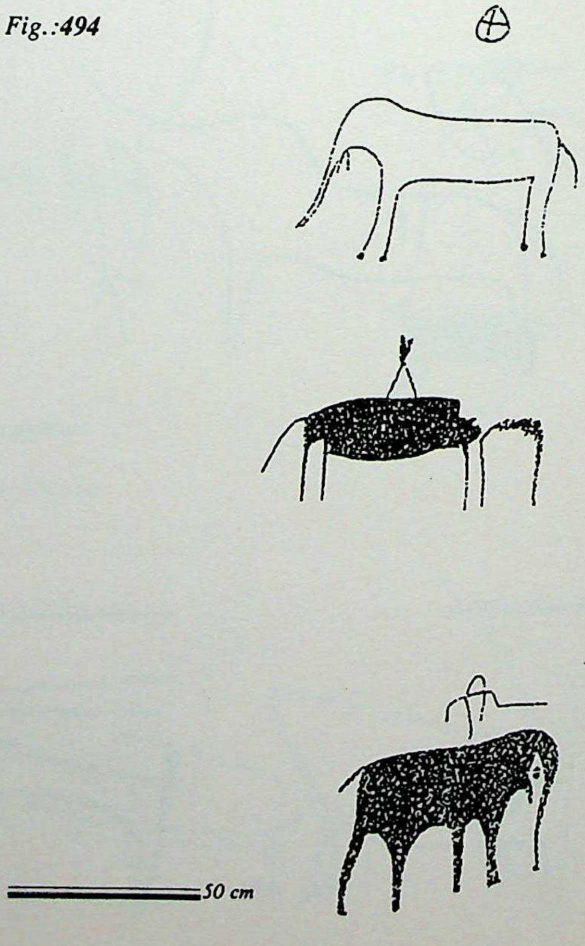


Fig.:494



Several large painting sites are situated in the vicinity of megalithic cemeteries. Several of these necropoles still show dozens of free-standing cyst graves, some of them of considerable size, whose origin goes back to the early iron age cultures of the Deccan. At many of these sites sherds of a typical black and red ware are to be found. The closeness of these paintings to the necropoles suggests a thematic closeness as well.

Horses are considered as vehicles of the souls by many tribal societies in modern India. Even today, the Korku peoples erect wooden remembrance-boards with carvings of the deceased who ride a horse, which is led by a guide to the other regions. Similar themes are also frequent on "Hero stones" which were erected as death memorials for personalities of particular clans.

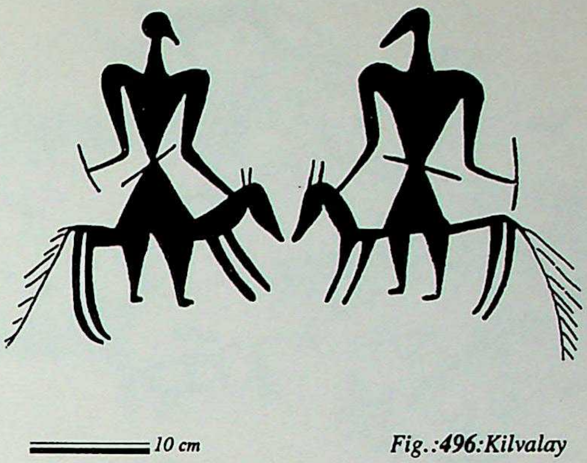


Fig.:496:Kilvalay

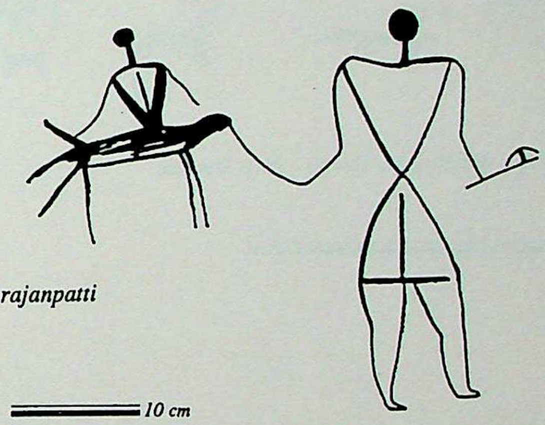


Fig.:495:Madurai-Sundarajanpatti

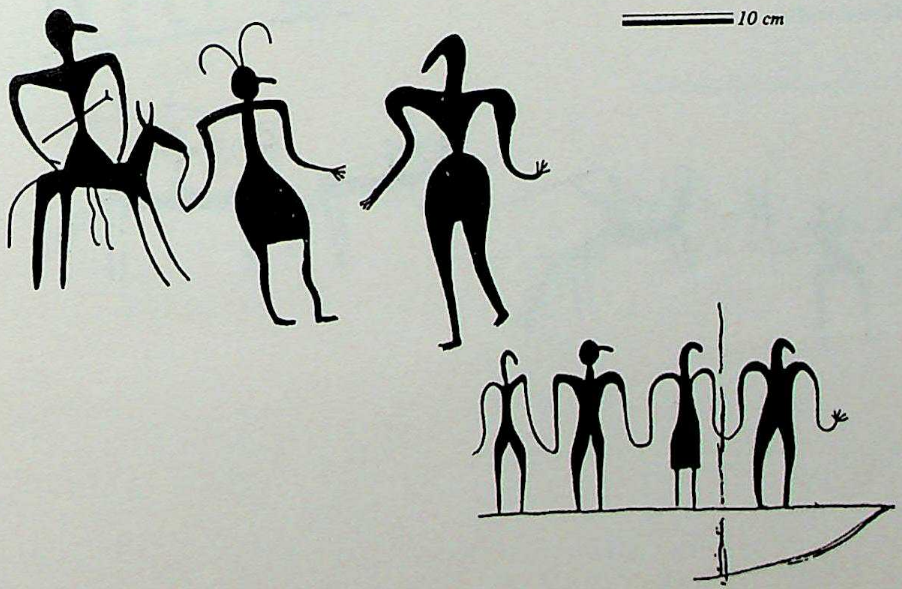


Fig.:497:Kilvalay

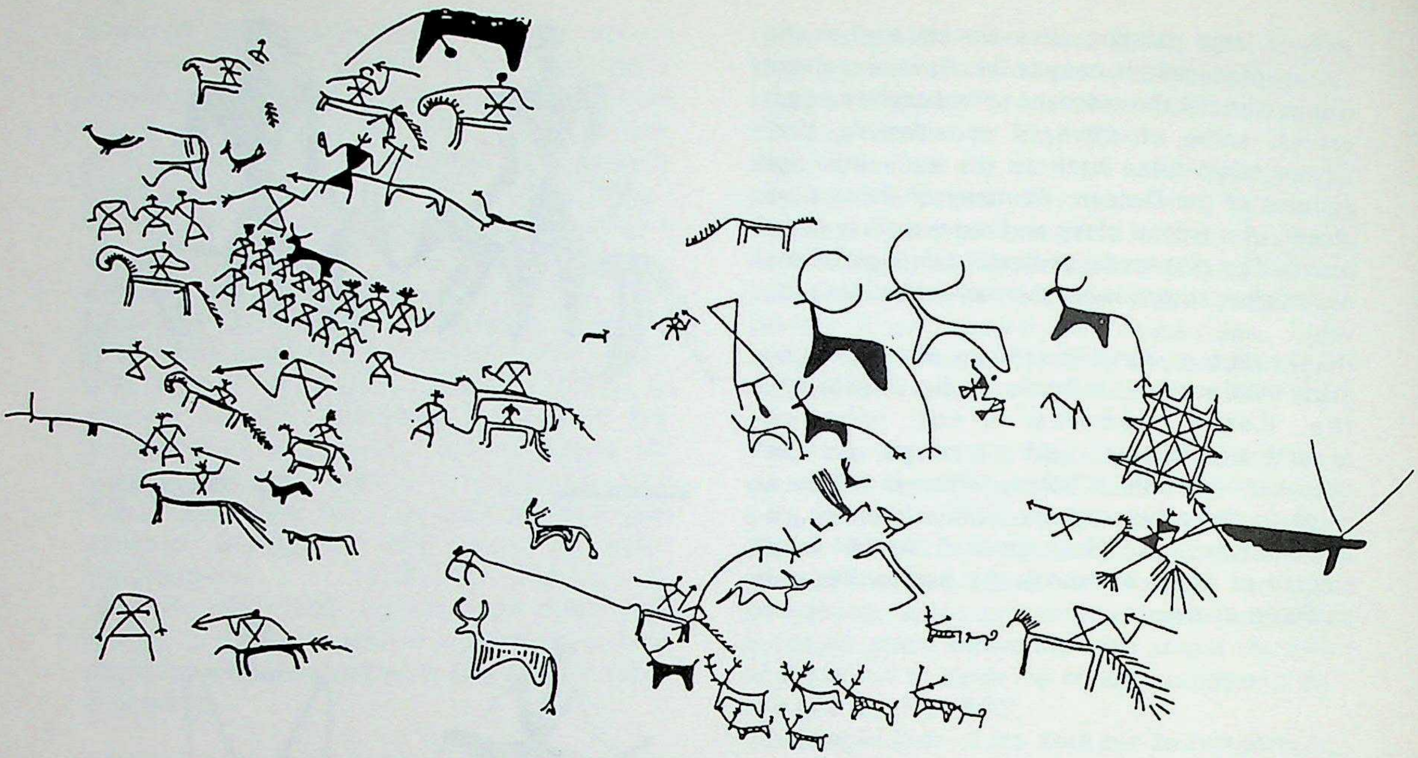


Fig.:498:Benakal Forest - Hire Benakal

50 cm

20 cm

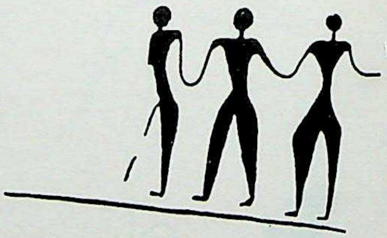
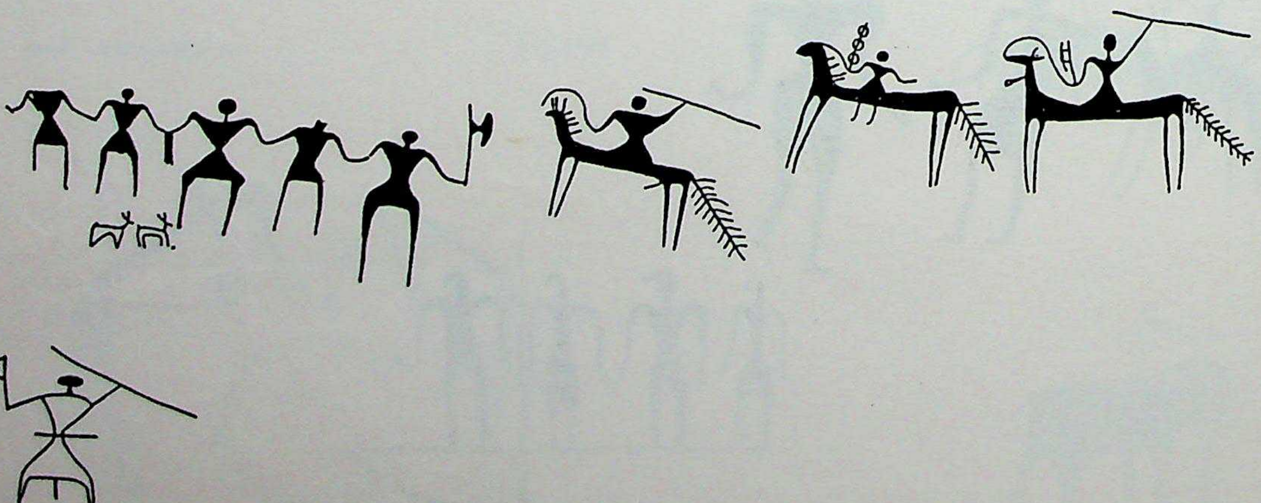
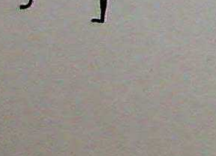


Fig.:499:Benakal Forest - Hire Benakal





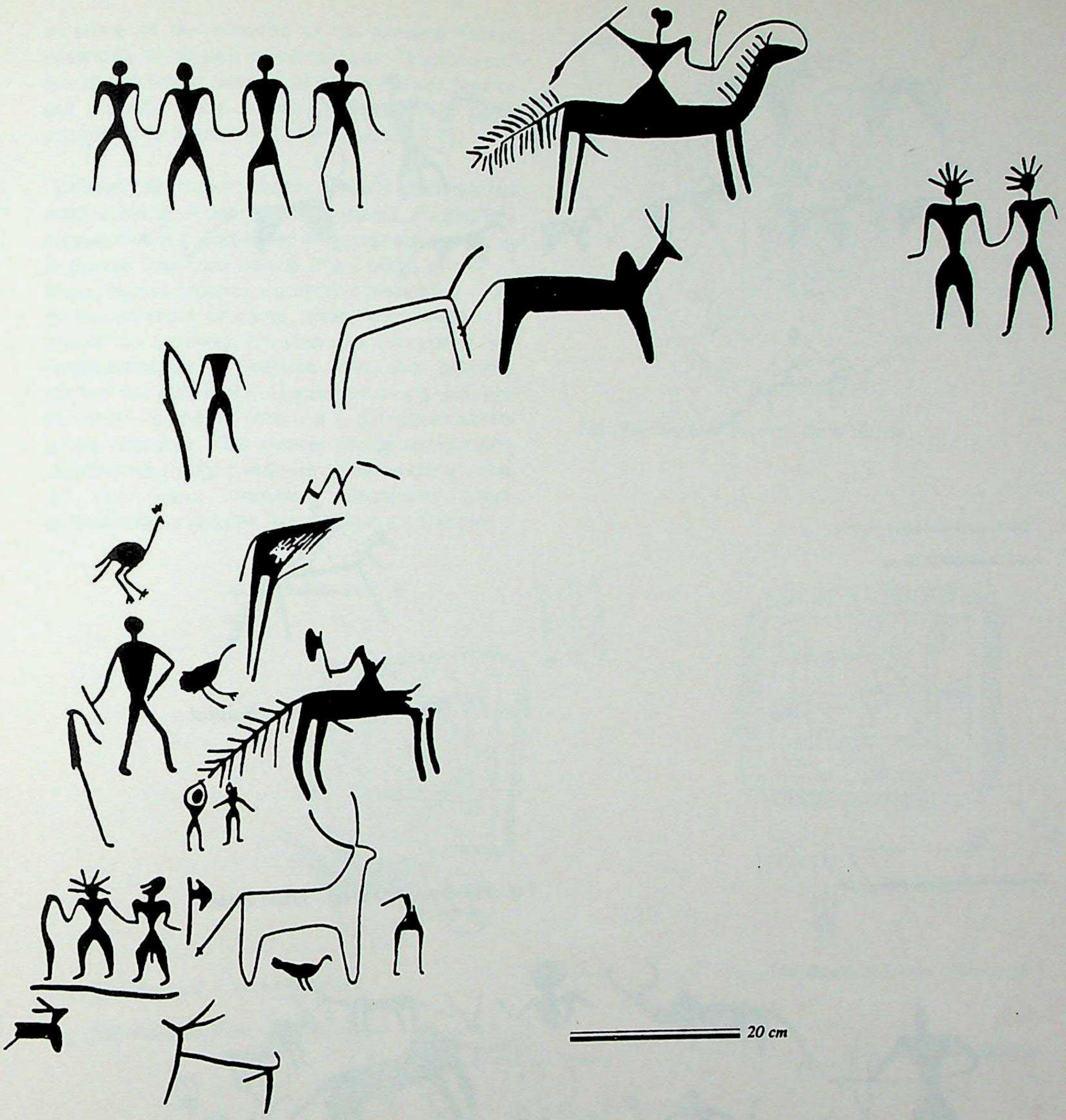


*Fig.:**500**:Benakal Forest - Hire Benakal*

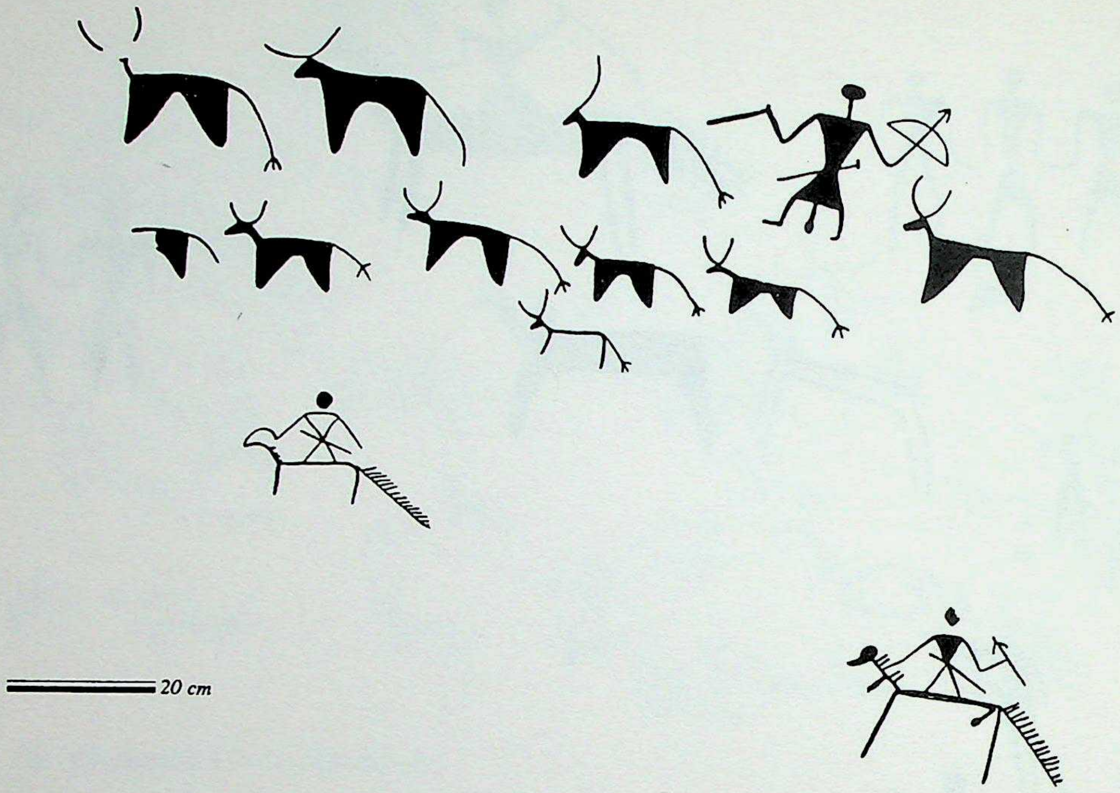


*Fig.:***501***:Benakal Forest - Hire Benakal*

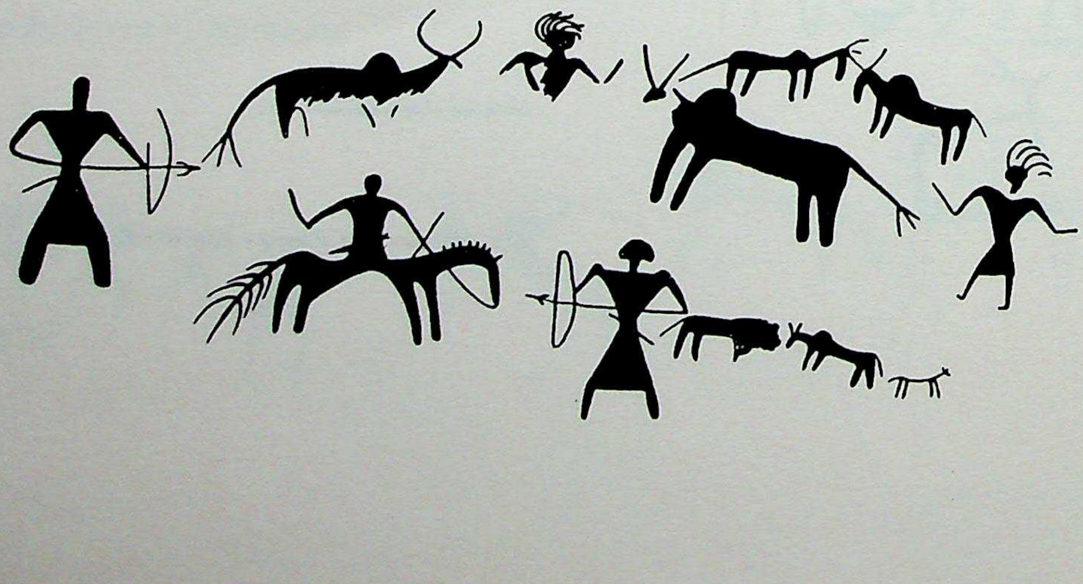


*Fig.:***502***:Benakal Forest - Oniki Kandi*

In some of the pictures of the Benakal Forest drawings of square or rectangular "enclosures" are found.Inside several of these human figures are placed. these squares are often in close proximity to figures of bulls (Figs.: 503-6).

I believe that these squares actually show sacred enclosures or more probably graves. Particularly suggestive is a picture of a circular space, which is parted into two halves (Fig.: 506). In one of these compartments a person is placed between unrecognizable artifacts. Since this painting is placed on a ceiling, the intended direction is not understandable. I believe that this painting shows the placement of a person along with her funeral goods into a compartmented grave-chamber. The smaller circles surrounding the chamber might indicate a "stone circle", one of the most common megalithic grave monuments available in the Southern Deccan.

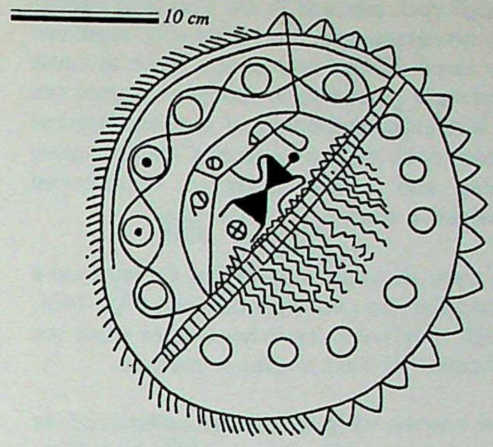
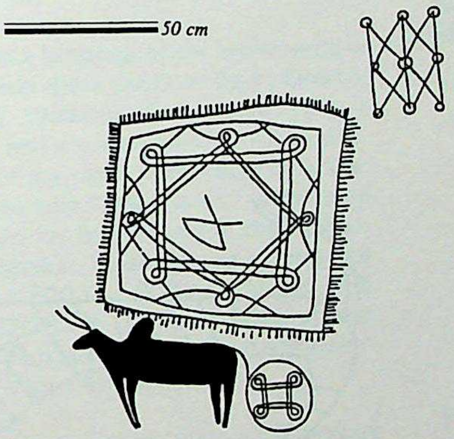


Fig.:506:Benakal Forest - Oniki Kandi



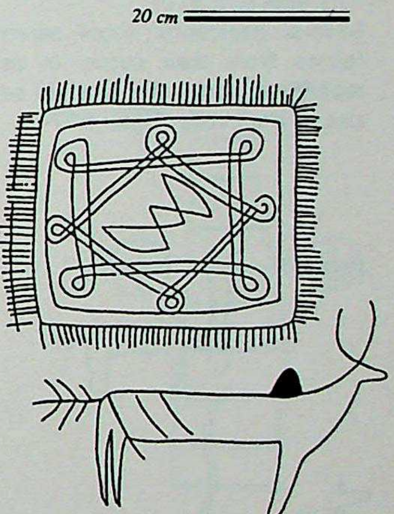
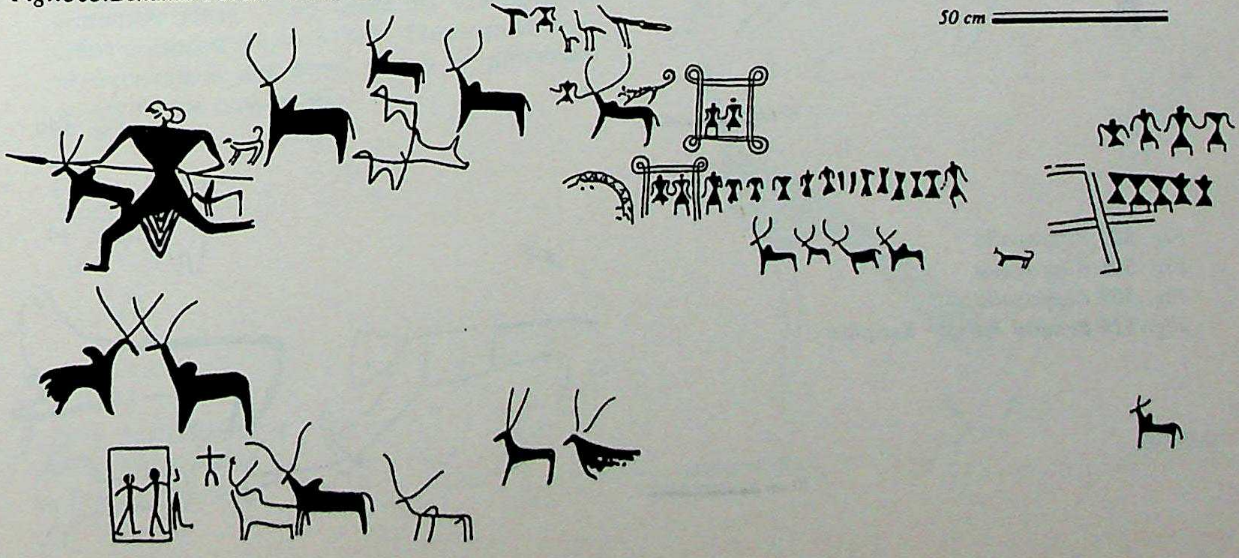


Fig.:504:Benakal Forest - Rampura

Fig.:503:Benakal Forest - Rampura

Fig.:505:Benakal Forest - Oniki Kandi



Although rock pictures in the Southern Deccan are by no means rare, the stereotyped repetition of the same themes and objects, such as cattle and formally placed anthropomorphs, does not allow a relevant technological analysis. Pictures of implements, tools or weapons are very rarely available, and in most cases not incorporated into narrative scenes.

In the very early pictures of the cattle-keepers and agriculturists axes were depicted (Fig.: 465), although they were too schematic to allow the identification of their shapes or material.

Picture scenes which could be understood as hunts are extremely rigid and reduced (Fig.: 483). The hunters are armed with bows and arrows or spears. The dog is frequently accompanying the hunters (Figs.: 470,498,505,510).
Several depictions show persons fending off felines from their cattle. In several of these repetitive scenes the cats are several times the size of the cattle (Figs.: 507-9).

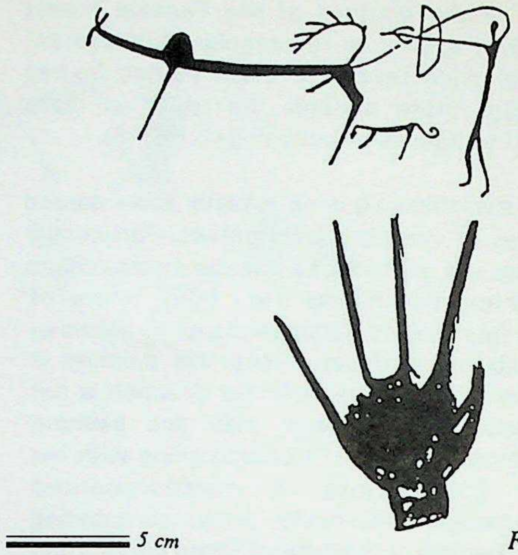
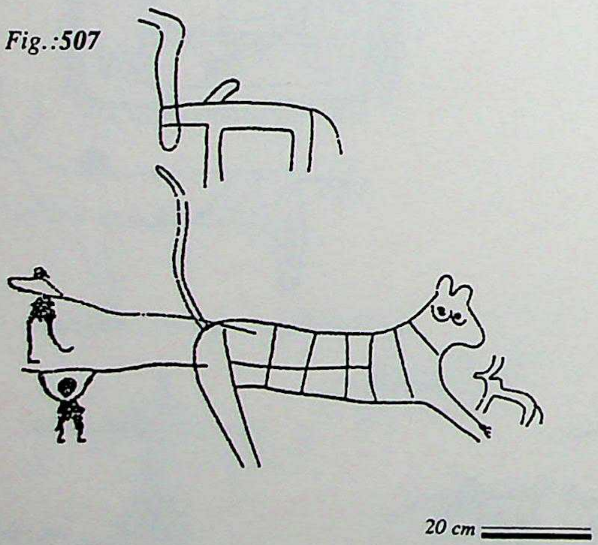


Fig.:510

Fig.:507



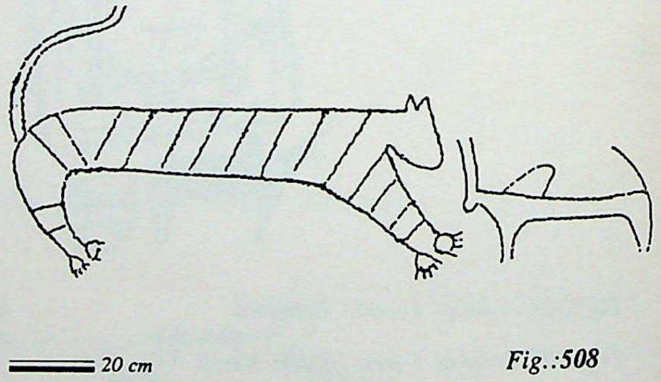


Fig.:508

Fig.:509

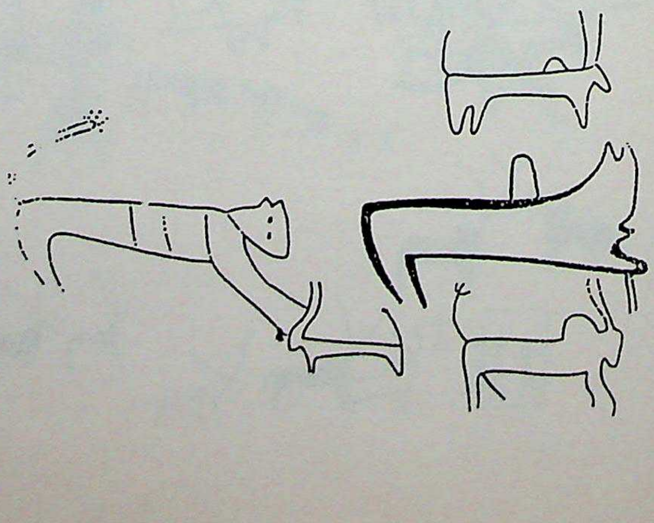


Fig.:507:Koppagallu
Fig.:508:Koppagallu
Fig.:509:Koppagallu
Fig.:510:Benakal Forest - Rampura

Chariots and carts are rarely to be found in the pictures of the Southern Deccan. I know of only six such depictions (Figs.: 452,468-9,511), of which only one is embedded in a wider scene, so that the stylistic affinities are understandable (Fig.: 512).
This cart depiction from Yerdanur shows yet another way of depicting the rather complex problem of perspective of a bullock cart. While the wheeled part of the cart is shown from the side, the oxen are placed back-to-back below (before) the cart. This picture is drawn on a very low ceiling, so low that even the painter could never see his composition as a whole, which in one case caused the error of placing the penis of one of the oxen near the front legs (Fig.: 512).

Depictions of carts are also to be found in the engravings of the Edakal Cave (Figs.: 10,511). These cart depictions also indicate the earliest time limit for these engravings as not earlier than the neolithic period.

Several of the rock bruisings show implements or weapons. In Maski there exists an approximately one meter-long bruising of a sword with a triangular blade and a lyre-shaped hilt (Fig.: 513). The middle rib of the blade is indicated by a line. Swords of bronze with "antenna hilt" were found in Kallur, not too far from Maski in the Raichur District of Karnataka. These bronze swords are dated between 1 500 to 1 000 B.C. (Allchin,B. & Allchin,R., 1982:287-8). Girded swords appear first in these rock pictures, in which horse-riders appear as well (Figs.: 496-502).

Besides the engraved sword, there exist several bruisings of large implements, which are shaped like weapons. Their size relations with accompanying human figures show them as extremely large. They might be standards or cultic weapons (Figs.: 514-9). These engravings of implements are often placed at prominent points on the granite hills.

Fig.:512

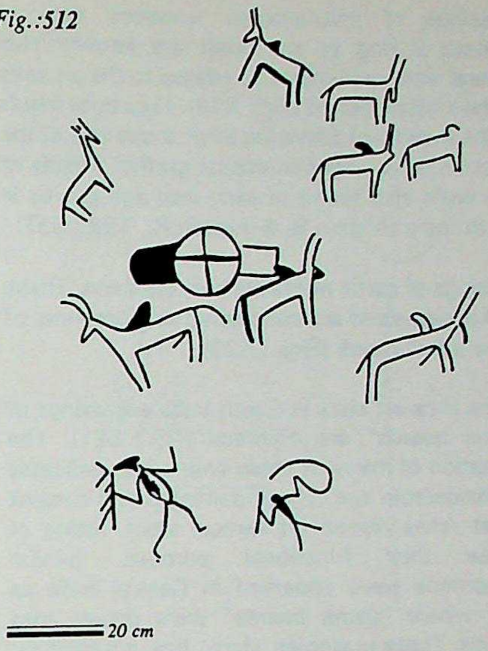
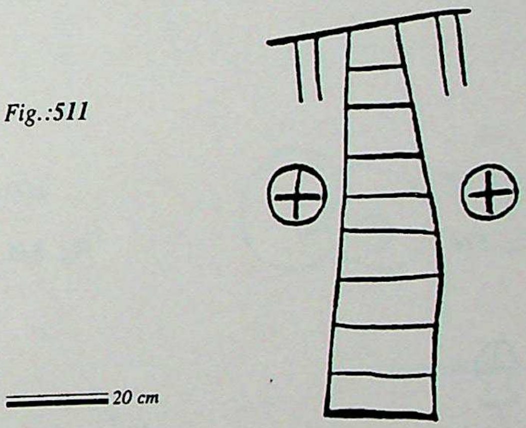


Fig.:511



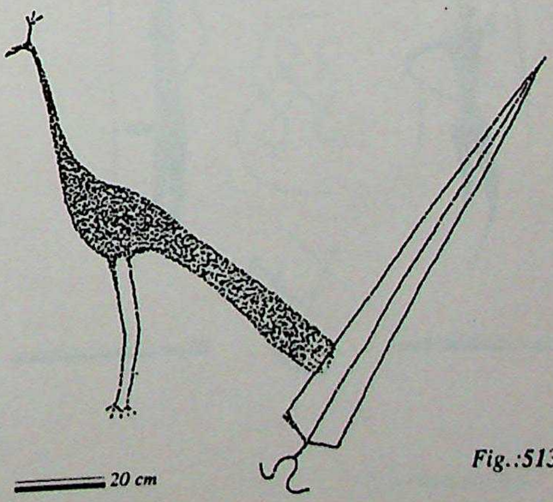


Fig.:513

Fig.:511:EdakalCave
Fig.:512:Yerdanur
Fig.:513:Maski

Bruisings of trisul-shaped weapons with or without a ring at the shaft are known from several sites, and might be related to the pictures of the historic period (Fig.: 518). Figures of trisuls as the symbol of Shiva are even today one of the most common signs in casual graffiti. Trisuls of iron were also found in early iron age graves in South India (Allchin,B. & Allchin,R., 1982:337).

Bruisings of cattle hoofs are very common. These hoof impressions are considered the footprints of Shiva's bull Nandi (Figs.: 520).

At the rock-art sites in South India engravings of "game boards" are common (Fig.: 521). The patination of many of these engravings indicates a considerable age. These gaming board designs are at times placed on vertical walls, losing of course their functional purpose. Similar phenomena were observed in Central India as well, where "game boards" were drawn onto ceilings. These examples show, how a functional design becomes a sign of an "extra-functional" order.

In Koppagallu as well as on several other rock-art sites, depictions of the "endless knot type" were found (Figs.: 522-3), which recall associations to similar designs which were found in Mohenjodaro engraved into copper tablets (Pande,B.M., 1979:268-83, Fig. 35/3,35/6). Similar "endless knots" I have seen as branding marks on cattle skins.

Fig.:514:Koppagallu
Fig.:515:Koppagallu
Fig.:516:Maski
Fig.:517:Maski

Fig.:514

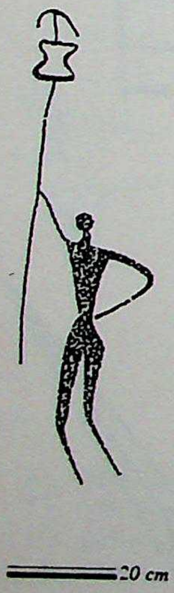


Fig.:515

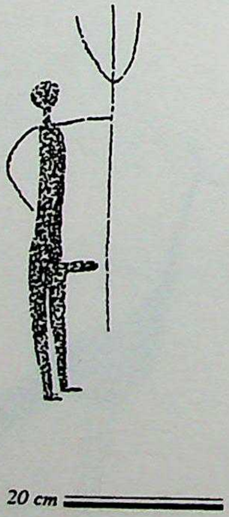


Fig.:516

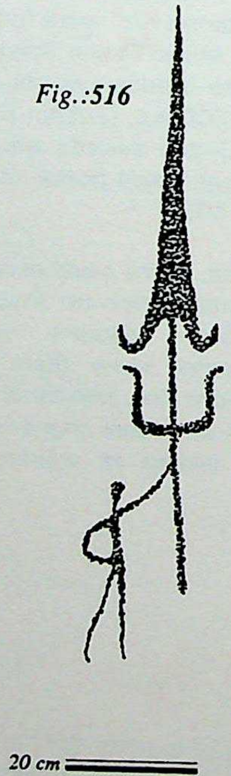


Fig.:517

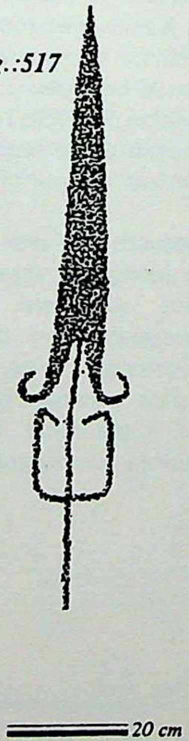


Fig.:519

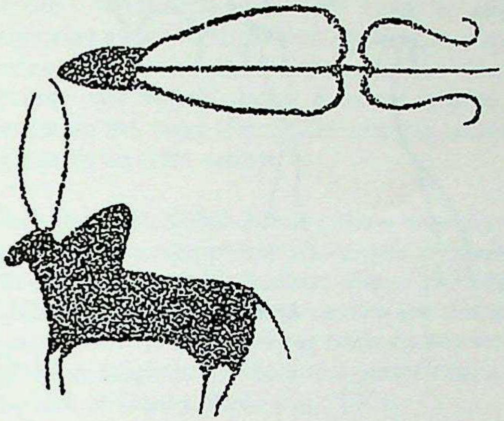


Fig.:518

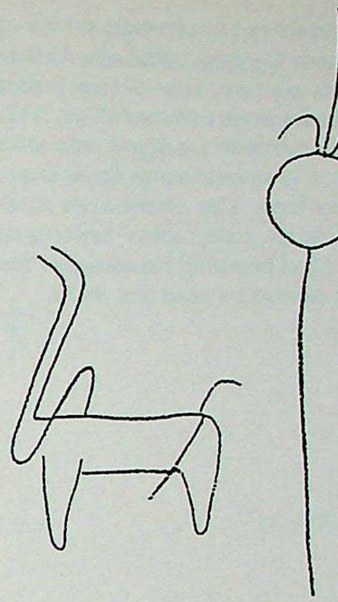


Fig.:520

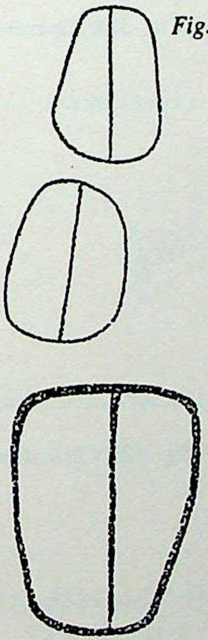


Fig.:521

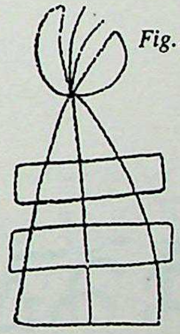


Fig.:522

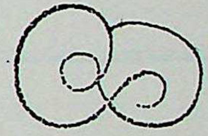


Fig.:523

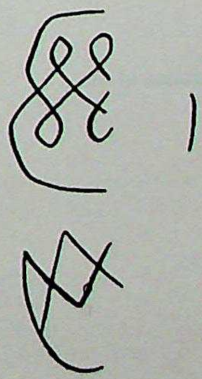


Fig.:518:Koppagallu
Fig.:519:Maski
Fig.:520:Koppagallu
Fig.:521:Koppagallu
Fig.:522:Koppagallu
Fig.:523:Ketavaram

Inscriptions are not uncommon at rock-art sites in the Southern Deccan. Although Asokan-Brahmi inscriptions are rare, later Brahmi inscriptions in later styles are quite common (Figs.:312,524-7). Particularly common are Shank-inscriptions (Fig.: 526), which in several caves cover large areas of the rock surface. This Shank-style surely was a peak in Indian calligraphy; unfortunately, on account of the beautiful flourishes of the letters, the script cannot be read any more.

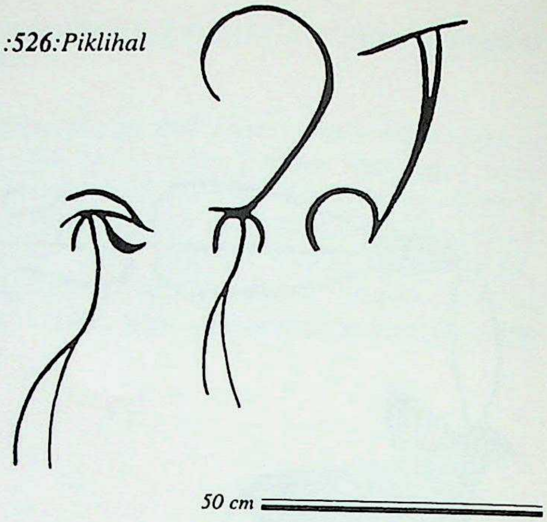


Fig.:526:Piklihal

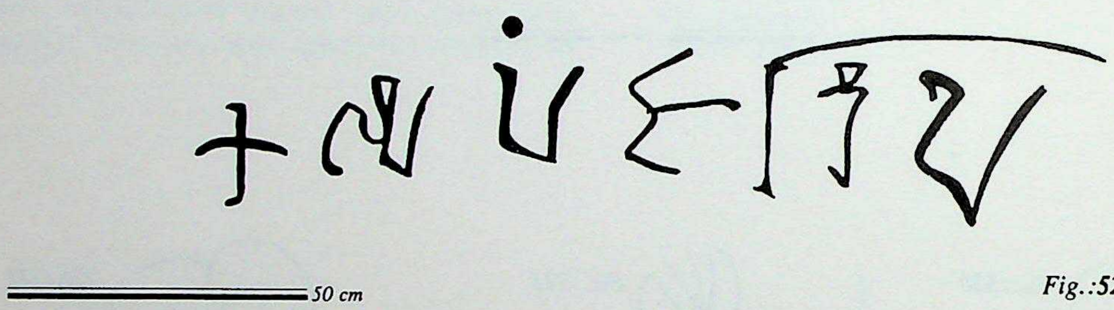


Fig.:524:Ketavaram

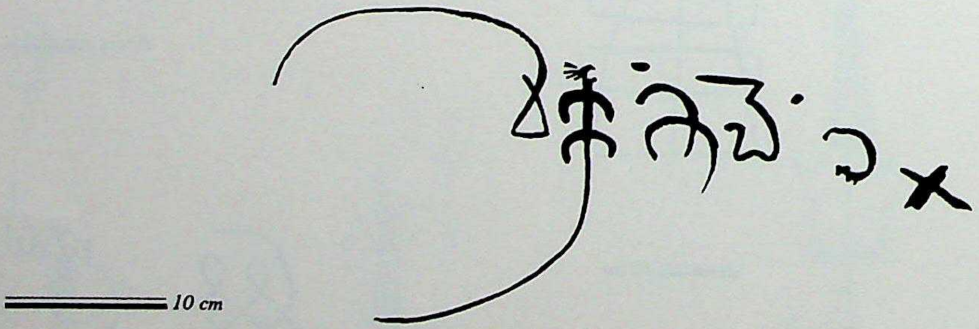


Fig.:525:Chintakunta

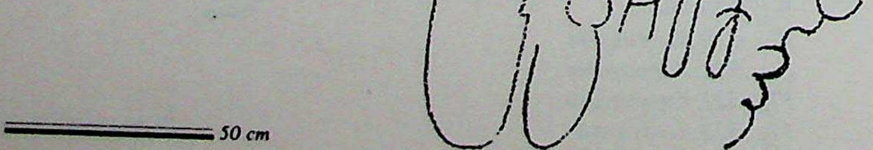


Fig.:527:Koppagallu

It is surprising, that among thousands of rock pictures in India, only few depictions of vessels were found. This is all the more surprising, since pottery was --at least since the chalcolithic period-- mass-produced, and used in large quantities even in the smallest settlements. From the rock pictures in the Southern Deccan I know of only one which shows a person holding a vessel on the head (Fig.: 529), but this bruising seems to be quite recent.

From the chalcolithic period I know only of two paintings in which pottery(?) vessels are shown in an obviously cultic context (Figs.: 387,528). In historic rock engravings vessels are similarly rare. One of the few comes from an engraving showing religious symbols and paraphernalia at the site of Gupha Masir (Fig.: 530).

More frequent are ceramic vessels shown in the historic rock paintings of the Mahadeo Hills (Figs.: 634-6,661,666,668). In these paintings pottery is even shown as cooking utensils placed over fire, as well as storage containers for honey.

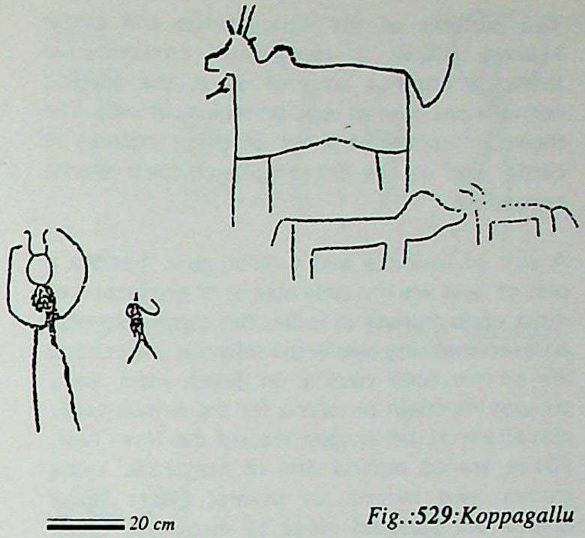


Fig.:529:Koppagallu

Fig.:528:Bangawan

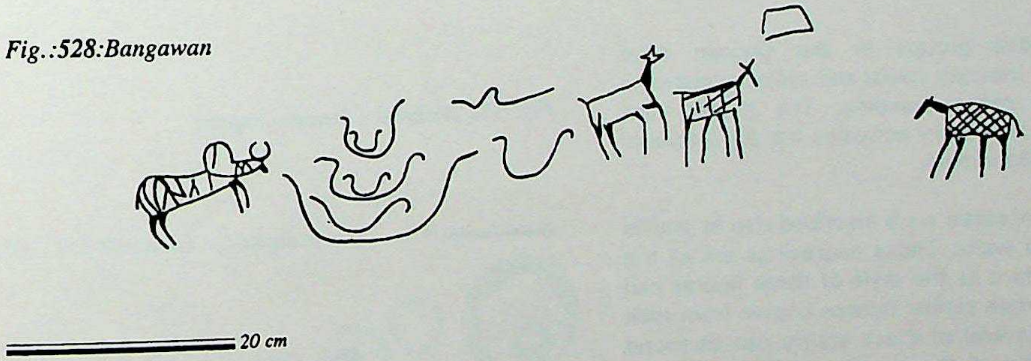
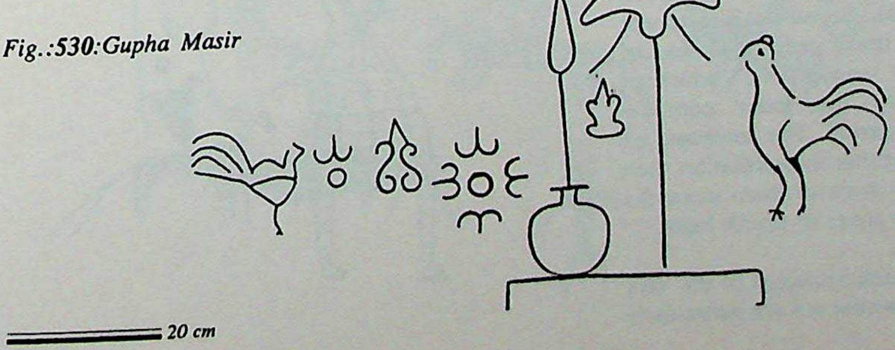


Fig.:530:Gupha Masir



The pictures of the agriculturists and cattle-keepers show a remarkable continuity in thematic content as well as in the stylistic conventions over all rock-art regions in India. The thematic centre of most of these pictures is cattle, and all the other figures appear almost secondary.

A pair of bullocks and a milch-cow, besides a plot of field are the only means of production of most agriculturists in India. But cattle also play an overwhelming role in the religious and cultural life of the rural people. In South India many villages maintain an arena for the annual cattle plays, which are staged around the New Year. These arenas remind one of megalithic stone circles, and indeed, in several places these arenas are situated close to megalithic burial sites, which in the local folklore are identified as houses of the Pandavas.

Many a local legend is woven around these Pandava *veddus*. Until recently nobody would ever purposely destroy these stone houses; the land on which they were situated was considered as wasteland, on which roamed the semi-wild village steers. Today these age-old taboos are eroded by the greed for land or for building material. Stone alignments and stone circles as well as dolmen and cysts are broken and levelled.

Several tribal groups in the Deccan have particularly intricate social and religious customs concerning cattle breeding. The people best known for their dairy activities are the Todas in the Nilgiri Mountains.

Depictions of cattle were inscribed also as graffiti onto temple walls. These engravings are all the more important as the style of these figures can be used to date similar figures known from rock bruisings. Several of these graffiti can be found at the plinths of the temples in Pattadkal and Aiholi, which were built in the eighth century A.D.

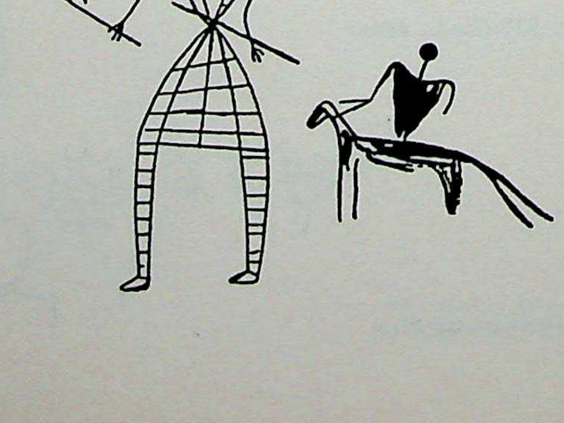
The technique of rock bruising is not an elitist art, requiring specialised skills. So we have to accept that a great number of these pictures are casual works of an "everyday iconography" which of course featured mainly the most common symbols of a particular period. The emphasis on cattle leave us with no other interpretation than the overwhelming importance of them since the neolithic period, in large areas of South India.

As already mentioned, rock bruisings of the very earliest style of the cattle-keepers are particularly frequent in the Krishna-Tungabhadra Doab, and were also noticed at Chintakunta in the Cuddapah District of Andhra Pradesh (Fig.: 473), which forms the eastern limit of this style group.

At the rock-art sites further south --in the Pudukottai District and South and North Arcot Districts-- only later pictures are known. In these pictures horse-riders and all the other features of metal-using cultures are present (Figs.:495-7,531-5,537-8). As already mentioned, these pictures most probably belong to the early iron-using cultures in the Southern Deccan.

The style of these pictures is very similar over large areas. The anthropomorphs are shown with hour glass-shaped bodies, particularly pronounced shoulders (Figs.:469-7,537), and "bird peaked" faces (Figs.:496-7,533). The arms of these people consisted of the sword and the axe.

Fig.:531:Madurai - Sundarajanpatti



Several of these paintings are situated in shelters which were also used by Jain monks from the second century B.C. onwards. The paintings at Sundarajanpatti near the Alangar Covil in Madurai lies in one of these shelters, which is protected from rain water by an engraved dripping line at the outside, under which an Asokan-Brahmi inscription exists, which tells about the donation of this shelter to Jain monks. Inside the shelter are several "Jain beds" chiselled into the rock floor.

The paintings of this group mainly shows riders on horses. which quite often are led by a groom (Figs.: 495-7). At several sites these rides are followed by rows of dancers (Figs.: 497,533). In the vicinity of similar pictures at Kilvalay in the South Arcót District there are graffiti in an almost script-like alignment (Fig.: 534). These signs seem to be related to "potters marks", which are a regular feature on the megalithic black and red ware (Cornelius,J.T., 1966:278-301).

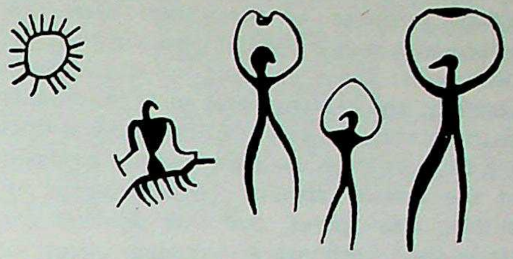


Fig.:533:Kilvalay

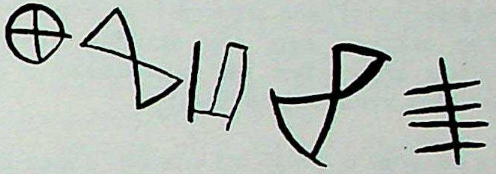
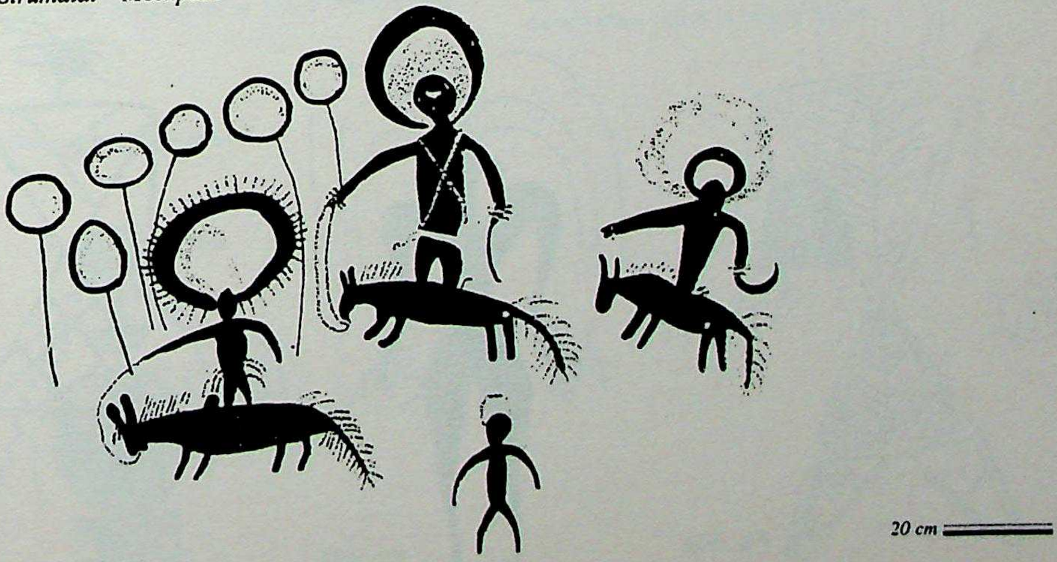


Fig.:534:Kilvalay

Fig.:532:Sirumalai - Meenputti



White paintings of horse-riders were also observed in several chamber graves at megalithic necropoles. These paintings are rarely applied carefully, and in many cases could be identified as the scribbles of recent visitors. Several times the dates of these visits are specified according to the British calendar. These paintings --if nothing else-- prove, that lime pigments can retain their freshness at protected places for dozens of years.
There are also several paintings at the site Birpalli-Mallasamudram, which stylistically must be compared with early historic rock pictures (Fig.: 535). The chronological contemporaneousness of these pictures with the erection of the grave chambers should not be discarded out of hand, although it is true that no white paintings were ever recorded from a chamber grave which had been opened in a controlled archaeological operation.

The paintings in Birpalli are invariably placed at the opposite slab from the circular passage hole, and only in a few instances at the perforated stone slab, if the chamber was broken open from the "back side". This may indicate that the paintings were made after the chambers were not longer used as burial buildings.

But it also has to be mentioned that at least from one cyst grave an engraving is known (Fig.: 536). This engraving of a person was found on one of the orthostates which was part of an iron age burial at the site Chinnanur in the Mahbobnagar District of Andhra Pradesh. The style of this engraving is comparable to many of the human figures found related to depictions of horse-riders in the Southern Deccan (Figs.: 536-8).

Fig.:535

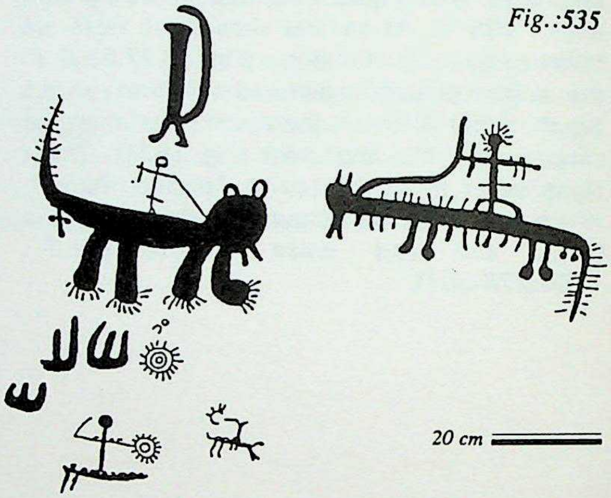


Fig.:535:Mallasamudram - Birpalli
Fig.:536:Chinnanur
Fig.:537:Kilvalay
Fig.:538:Maduarai - Sundarajanpatti

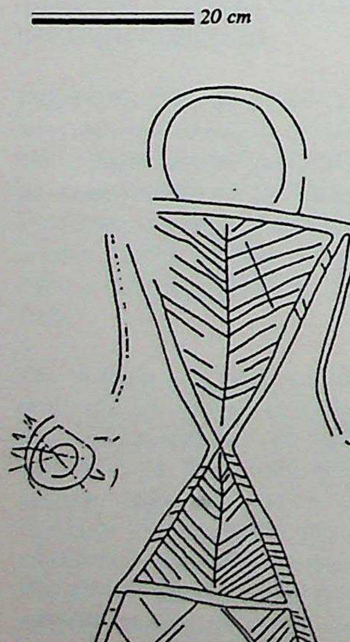


Fig.:536

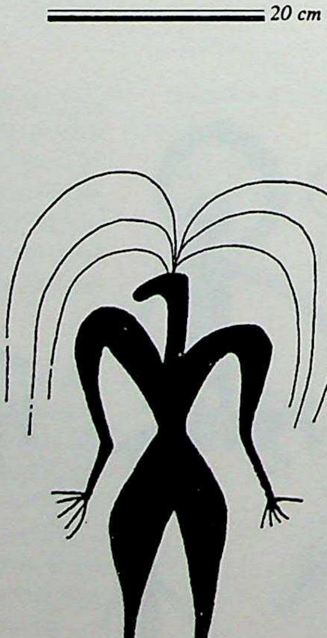


Fig.:537

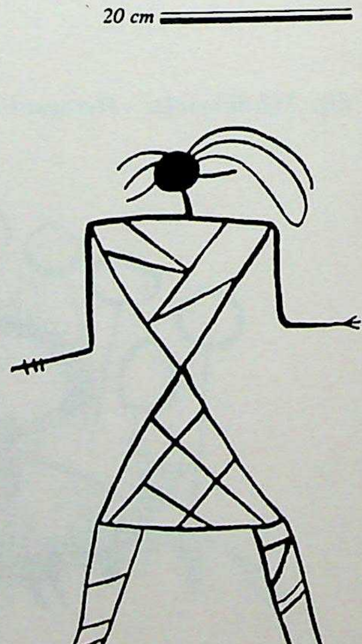


Fig.:538

Rock painting was an art activity which took place in a social setting, which very rarely left traces usable for historical research. For this reason the demarcation between protohistoric and historic rock-art seems very synthetic and of little relevance.

Indeed, only very few inscriptions could be understood as being connected directly to rock pictures, elevating them to historical documents. Icons, which can be related directly to the "mainstream" mythologies and religious movements like Jainism, Buddhism or Hinduism, are equally rare. Still, it is these pictures which furnish us with welcome chronological data.

In Southern India as well as in the much richer rock-art sites of Central India very few pictures are found which can be related to the standardised and codified iconography of Jainism, Hinduism or Buddhism.

It is not very clear which objects were instrumental in transferring elements of iconicity into the very closed socio-cultural environment in which rock-art functioned. That hermitages were established in these shelters may be a good guess. Buddhist and Hindu sanctuaries drew a socially diverse audience. The reliefs on walls or stone fences of religious monuments must have made an impression on rock artists who took up a few suggestions from these, and adapted them to existing conditions.
The reliefs on these early Buddhist and Hindu sanctuaries were organized mostly in linear narrations, a feature which was never really given up in Indian art. But already in these very early reliefs the perspective was handled in such a way as to create the illusion of a three-dimensional space, something which was never attempted in rock pictures, except may be in a stereotype three-quarter perspective treatment of faces in some paintings in the Mahadeo Hills.
This shows that the socio-cultural environment in which rock-art flourished was a very autochthonous world, with its own codified laws of tradition and change.

As already mentioned, Buddhist symbols are rarely found in rock-art. Depictions of *stupas* are known only from two sites in Central India. One site, Idar in the Panchmahal District of Gujarat, contains several groups of *stupa* paintings, of which one is overpainted by a Gupta-Brahmi inscription (Figs.: 542-3). Another site is Kotra near Narsinghgarh in the Rajgarh District of Madhya Pradesh. This site must have been a large Buddhist centre, considering the sizes of the now derelict *stupas* which lay as rubble heaps in the jungles near bye.
One depiction of a *stupa* is overlaying an Asokan-Brahmi inscription (Fig.: 539), while another *stupa* is overlaid by a Brahmi inscription in Shank characters (Fig.: 540). Thus, the time horizon for these *stupas* are similarly between 200 B.C. and 500 A.D.

Further depictions of Buddhist icons were found at the site Chibbar Nulla close to Bhanpura in the Mandasor District of Madhya Pradesh. A pillar with a *Dharmacakra* on top as well as a *Bodhi* tree --with individual leaves indicated-- are shown besides a large depiction of a Triratna symbol (Fig.: 544).
In one of the shelters at this site is a large Asokan-Brahmi inscription painted in small letters. Short inscriptions in Brahmi were found at many sites in the Vindhya Region. In most cases they state a single name.

Fig.:539:Narsinghgarh - Kotra

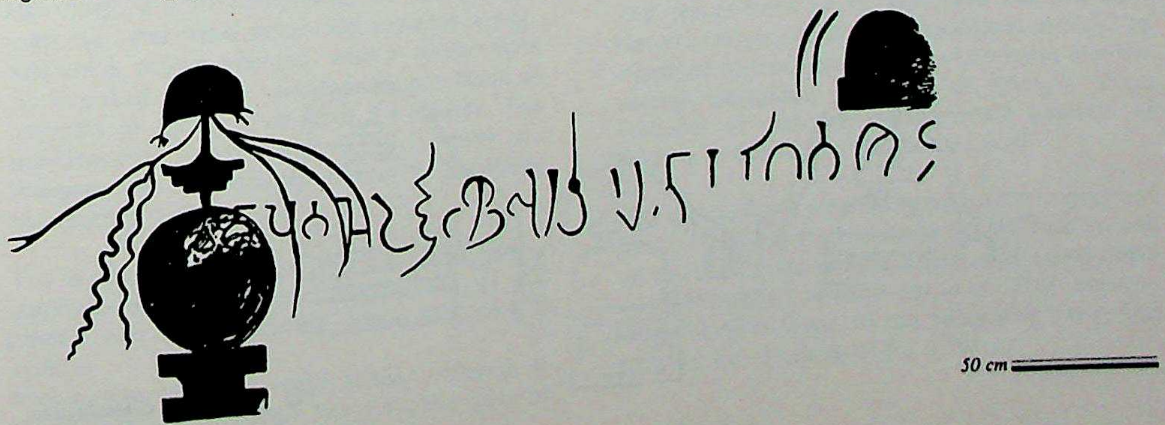


Fig.:540:Narsinghgarh - Kotra

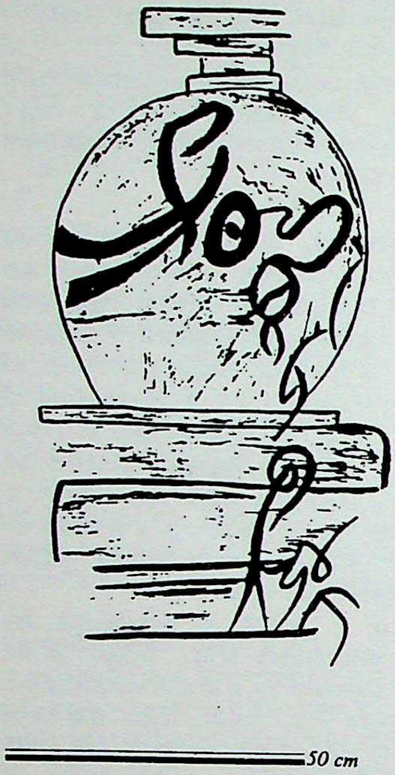
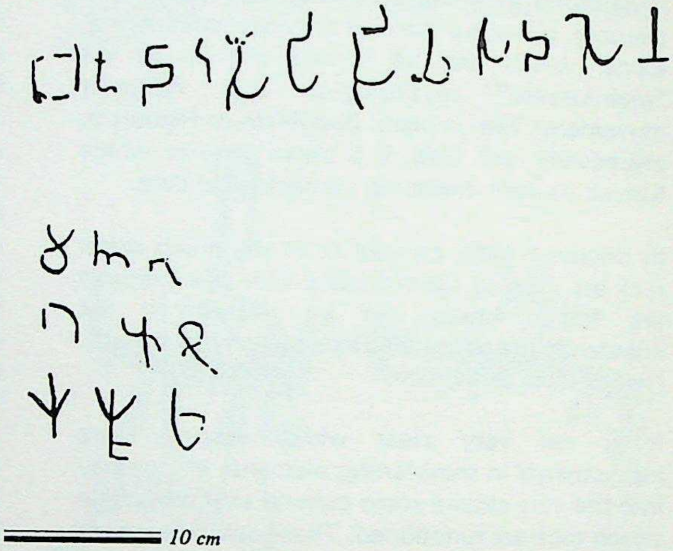


Fig.:541:Kanjadei



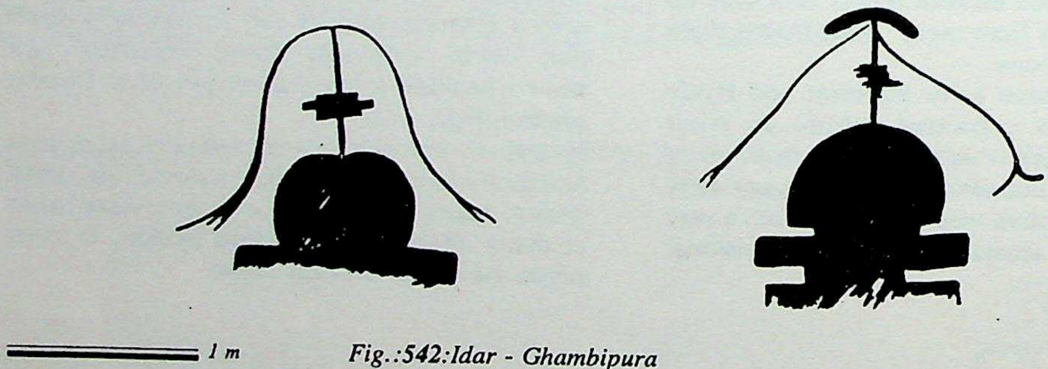


Fig.:542:Idar - Ghambipura

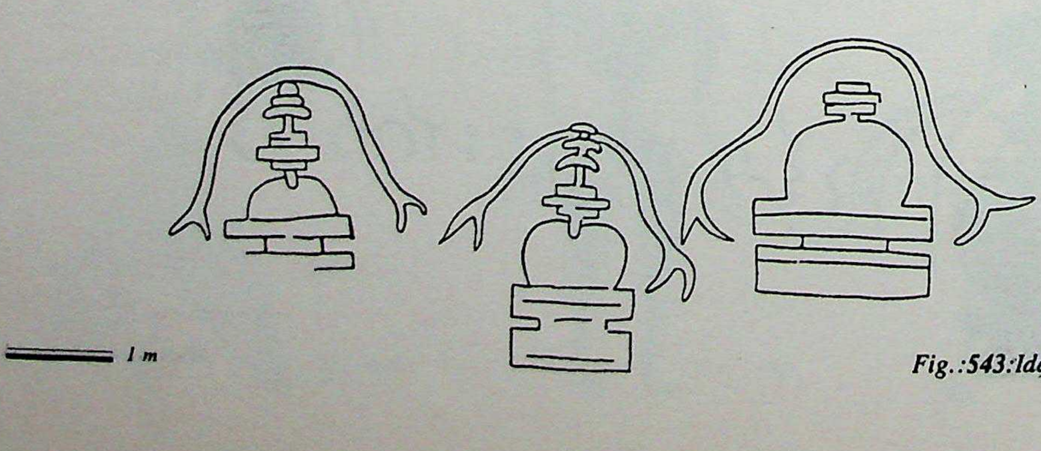


Fig.:543:Idar - Ghambipura

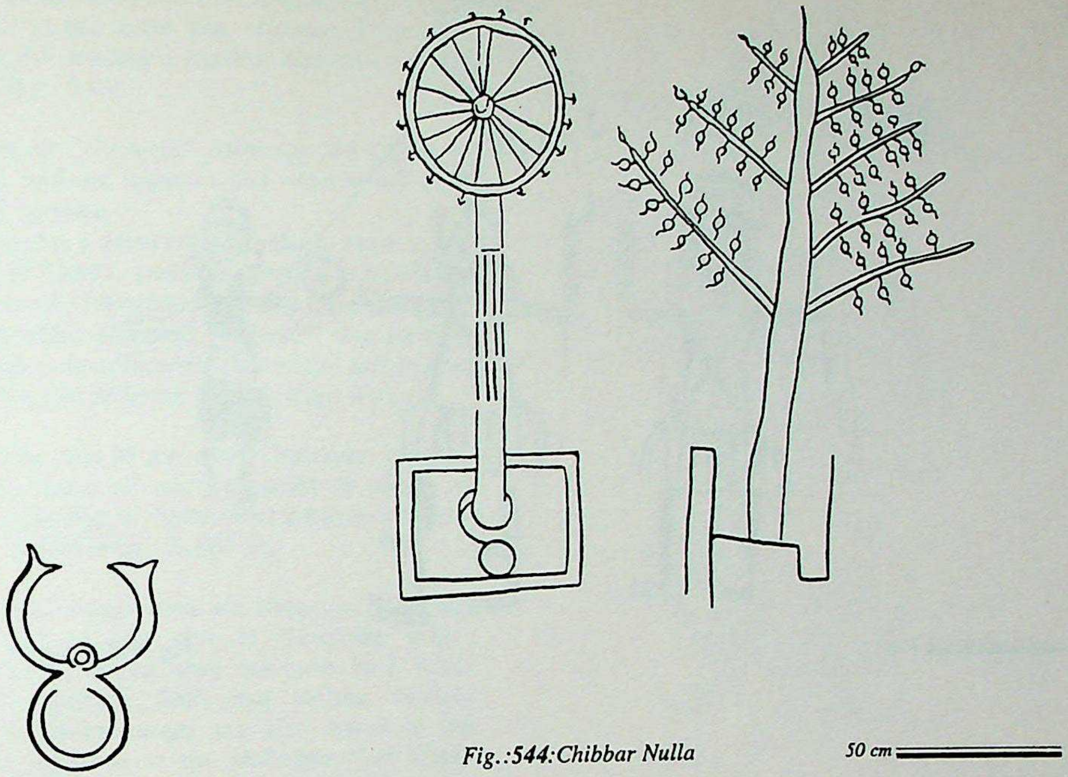


Fig.:544:Chibbar Nulla

An Asokan-Brahmi inscription is situated over the picture of the two Bhakta gods Krishna and Balarama, which was found at the site Tikula in the Gwalior District of Madhya Pradesh (Fig.: 545). The inscription refers to the painter of this very important icon as Dambuka.
This picture, which was found by Wakankar (IAR 1956/7:79; Brooks,R.R.R. & Wakankar,V.S., 1976:32), shows Balaram with a plough in one hand, holding with his other hand a staff which resembles the ear of corn. Besides him, Krishna also holds a staff resembling the ear of corn, with his other hand stretching towards a disc. Krishna is shown bearded, with a diadem over his forehead. A third --smaller-- person holds an umbrella of honour over both the figures. The transliteration of the inscription is given by Wakankar as "Dambuken Karitam" (Dambuka has made [this]).

The inscription does not give the name of the depicted gods, and the paraphernalia of the deities was not recognized during Wakankar's visit.
Within the last few years similar pictures of these bhakta deities were found at sites close to the city of Chilas at the Indus in North Pakistan (Figs.: 547-8),(Dani,A.H., 1983:Pl. 80; Jettmar,K., 1984:pl. 9). These depictions also state the names of the deities as Baladebo and Vasudebo in the Koroshti script.
Both gods and their paraphernalia are also depicted on silver coins which were issued by King Agathocles, who ruled from Taxila from ca.180 till 170 B.C., and were found in a hoard of coins at the ancient city of Ai-Khanoum (Fig.: 546), (Audouin,R. & Bernard,P., 1974:14,Pl. I).

The picture from Tikula represents the only early historic painting of Bhakta Deities which could be identified without doubt. It is interesting that the painter elongated the legs of Krishna, most probably to indicate the elevated position of Krishna in relation to Balaram as well.

The iconographic relation between the engravings from Chilas and the paintings from Tikula as well as the depictions on the Agathocles coins make a chronological relation obvious. This painting from Tikula belongs to the second or early first century B.C. (Neumayer,E., 1991a).

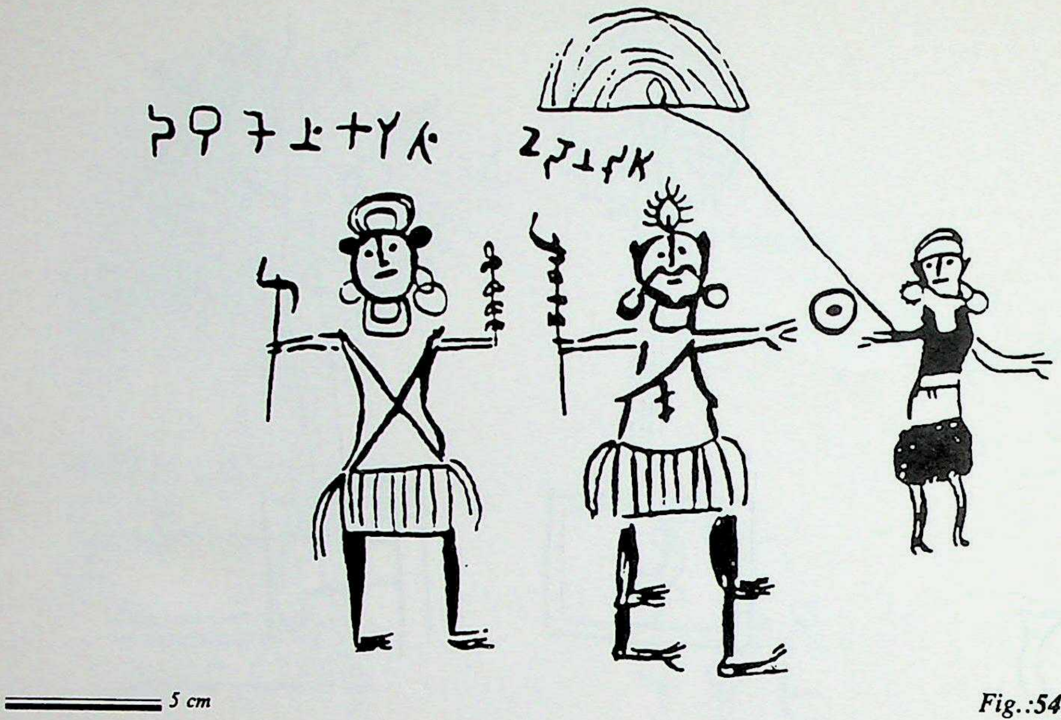
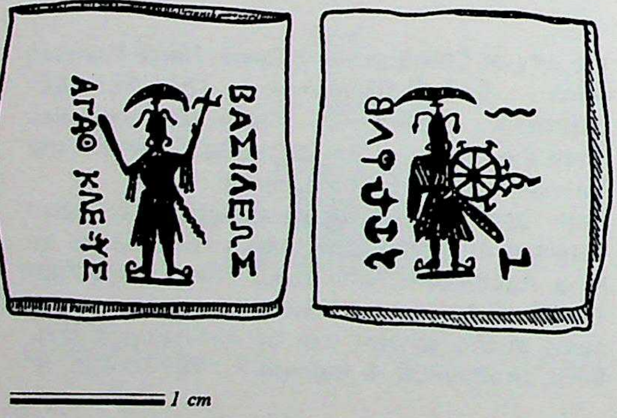


*Fig.:**545**:Tikula*

*Fig.:**546**:Ai-Khnoum*


ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ
ΑΓΑΘΟ ΚΛΕ-ΥΣ
1 cm

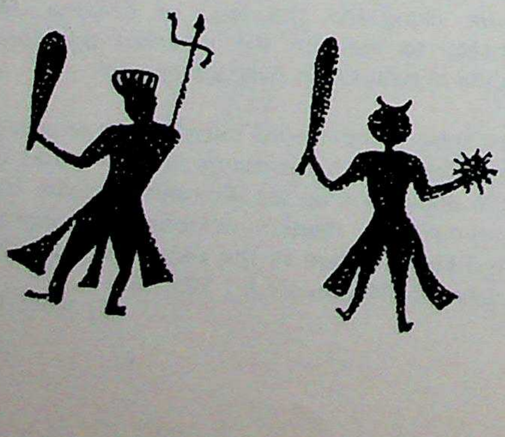
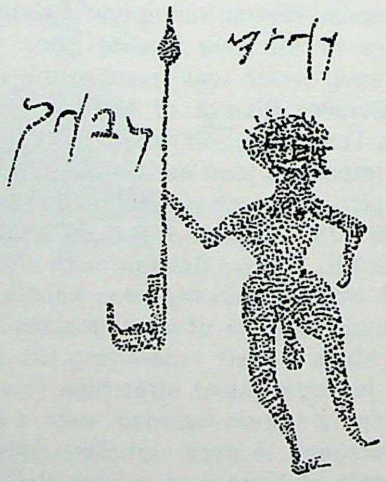


*Fig.:**547**:Chilas*

*Fig.:**548**:Chilas*



Another interesting and unique depiction of a god is found at the same site, showing Shiva with matted hair holding a musical instrument in his hands (Fig.: 549).

Remains of "classical" paintings are found at several rock-art sites in the vicinity of early historic temples.
At Nagourie, a small hill and village, close to the *stupas* of Sanchi, exist the remains of a painting of which only the colour-shadows have remained, like stencilled contours. Originally this painting had shown an enthroned personality and several adjutants and umbrella bearers (Fig.: 550).

In Badami, one of the early Chalukyan capitals, several "classical" pictures exist in caves, in which paintings of many other periods are to be found as well (Figs.: 5,551-2).

Enthroned personalities are shown in "Kushana paintings" at the site of Satkunda (Figs.: 605,607-9), where they are part in a wider cultic(?) context. Enthroned heroes, holding weapons threateningly are also found in the historic paintings in the Mahadeo Hills (Figs.: 637,642,690).

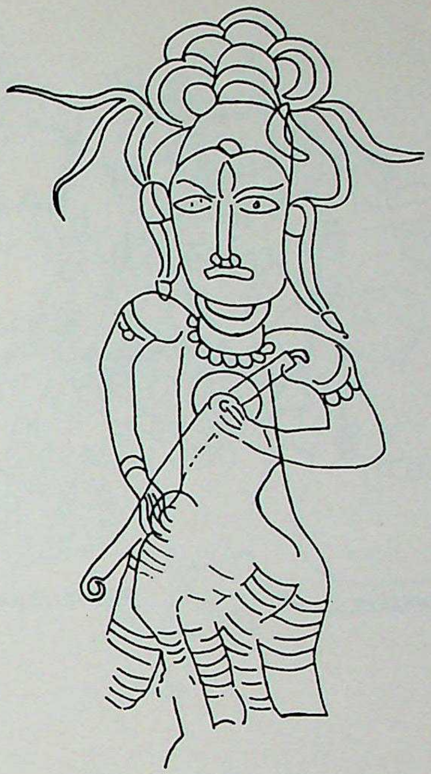
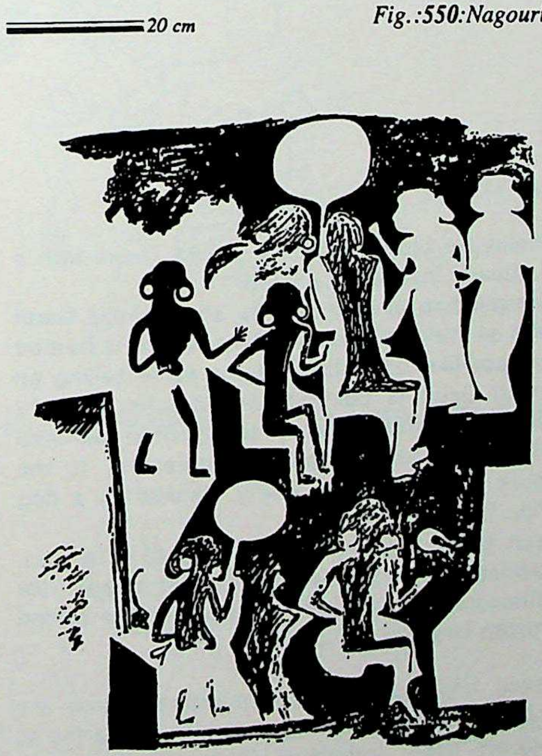


Fig.:549:Tikula

Fig.:550:Nagourie



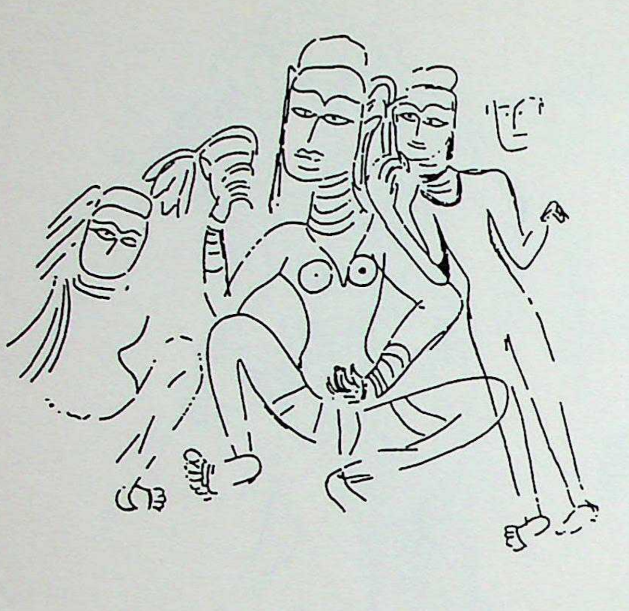


Fig.:551:Badami

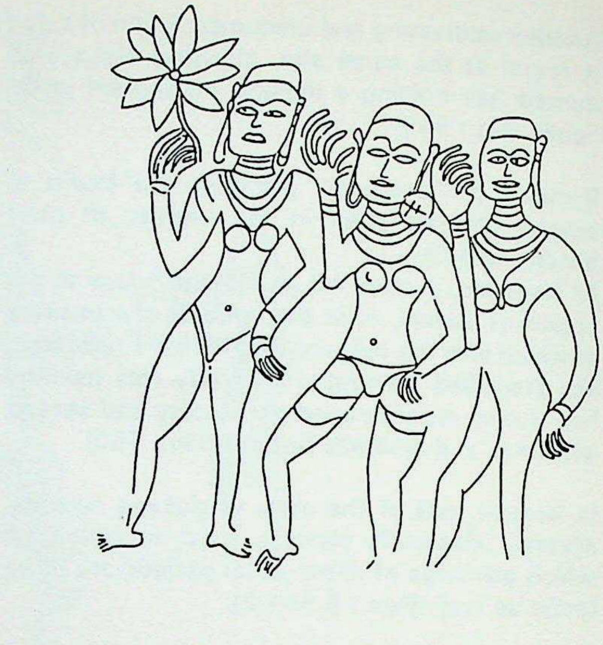


Fig.:552:Badami

Also of interest are the paintings from Chintakunta in Andhra Pradesh, showing a large figure of Gauri (Fig.: 553), holding her legs apart and displaying her pudenda. The goddess is seated on a small seat, which obviously is placed at the back of a carnivore.

Lajja Gauri, the naked goddess, is one form of "The Great Goddess" which is generally shown as a faceless woman exhibiting her genitalia. Depictions of this goddess are mostly known from small relief tablets of slate-stone, which were given as *ex voto* at temples or sacred spots, where the one or other form of this goddess was worshipped (Sonavane,V.H., n.d.: 27-35; IAR 1978/9:63,Pl. 38). A few large sculptures of this form of the "Great Goddess" are known, the most famous being a large sculpture of Lajja Gauri now housed in the Archaeological Museum of Badami. This Chalukyan stone sculpture shows Gauri with a sunflower instead of a head.

The painting in Chintakunta shows Lajja Gauri with an intricately painted face, which is framed by petal-like flourishes. At the same ceiling on which Gauri is painted several other tutelary goddesses and *apsaras* are painted as well (Figs.: 554-5). Particularly interesting is the figure of a demon-like being, flanked by a dog (Fig.: 556).

Even today Gauri is widely revered in a non-codified cult by women of different creeds. Her sanctuaries are much frequented by barren women begging for children.

These "classical" pictures mentioned here are only the more interesting examples appearing at rock-art sites. Individual figures of this kind appear at many more sites in Central India as well as in the South.

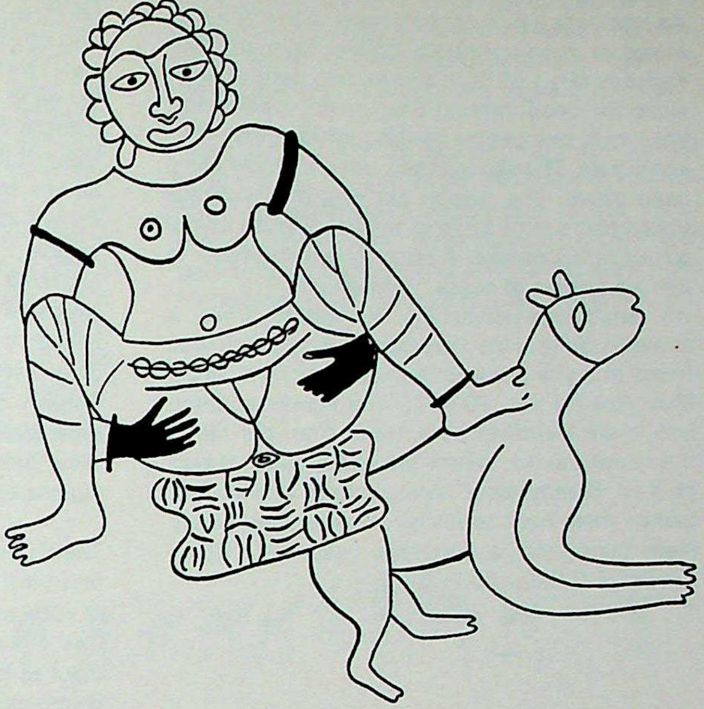


Fig.:553:Chintakunta

20 cm

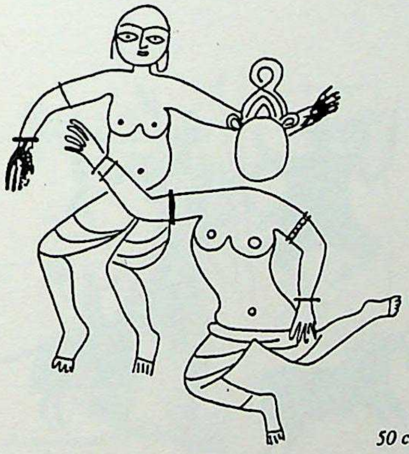


Fig.:555:Chintakunta

50 cm

Fig.:554:Chintakunta

20 cm

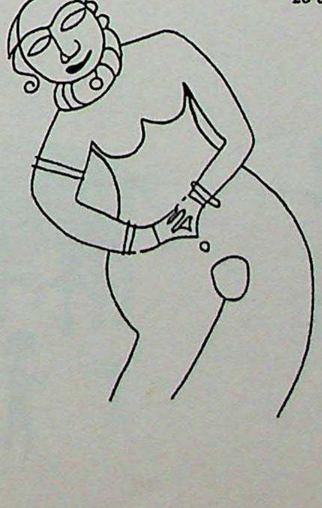
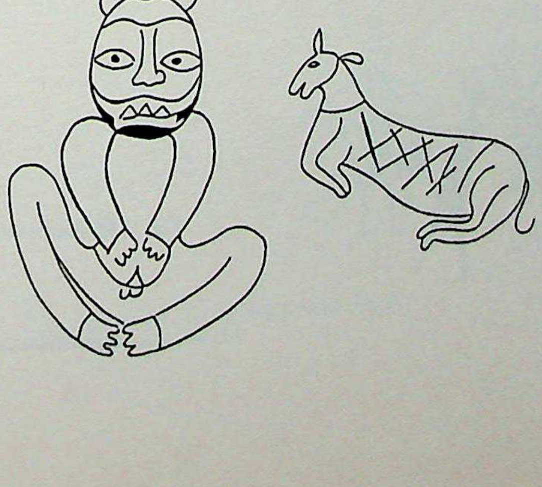


Fig.:556:Chintakunta

50 cm



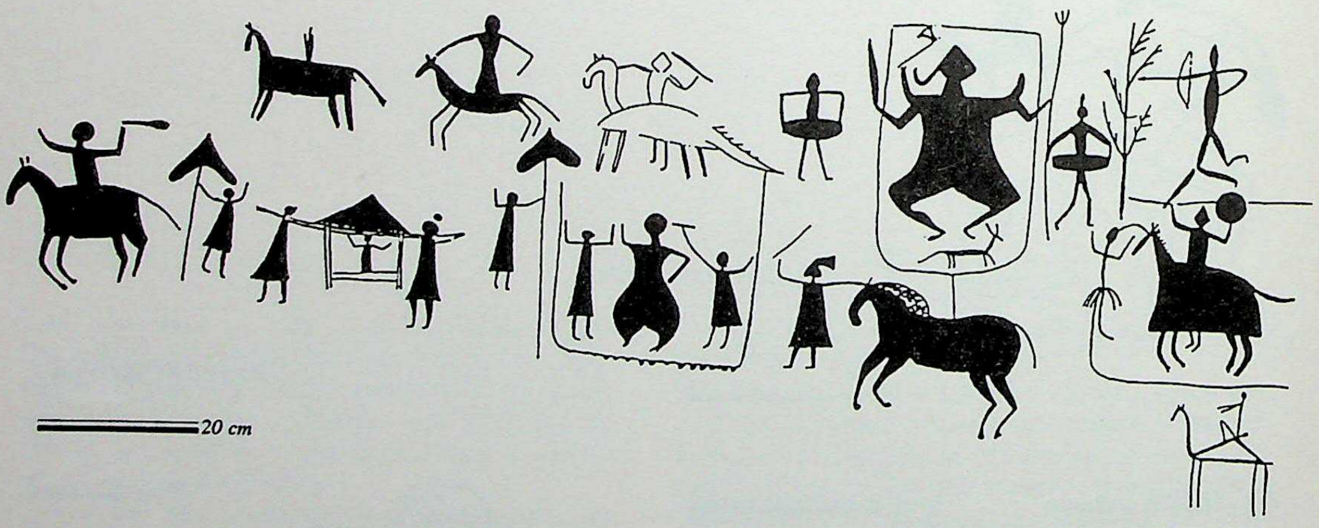
An interesting picture, belonging to this group of narrative hero-portrayals comes from the site Kathotia (Fig.: 558). It shows two persons with elaborate headdresses. One carries a porterage yoke with two people hanging upside down from either side. The second too carries a human being head down. The person carrying the porterage yoke holds a large knife in one hand, and a sword girded at his middle. A large bow-man seems to aim his arrows at these "kidnappers".

An analogous depiction is known from a stone-lintel from the first century B.C., which was found at a site close to Mathura (Mathura, Arch. Mus. Acc.No. 14. 15 431). The figures sculpted into it are identified as a scene from the Maha Sutasoma-Jataka, where the exiled cannibal king of Kasi Brahmadatta kidnaps two victims and carries them back to his lair. Here too he carries them hung from a porterage yoke (Fig.: 567), (Cowell,E.B.[Ed], 1895:246).

Gods, portrayed in the still accepted iconography and equipped with recognized paraphernalia, are very rarely depicted in rock pictures. A painting, showing between other figures an icon of Ganesh is known from Bhimbetka (Fig.: 557). Ganesh is shown with four arms, and a sword, an axe and the trisul in three of his hands. He is shown above a small animal, most probably his vehicle, the rat. This figure of Ganesh is encircled and placed at the back of a horse which is led by a groom. Ganesh himself is flanked by two drummers. This placement of the deity seems like the portrayal of an image of Ganesh carried on the back of a horse. This organization reminds one of the iconography of tribal bronzes, as they are still cast in several regions of Central India.

The distinctive frame of Ganesh allows us for the first time to name a deity. Other gods depicted in rock paintings are not as easily identifiable. One more figure of a multi-armed god with a trisul as his weapon is known from Bhimbetka.

Fig.:557:Bhimbetka



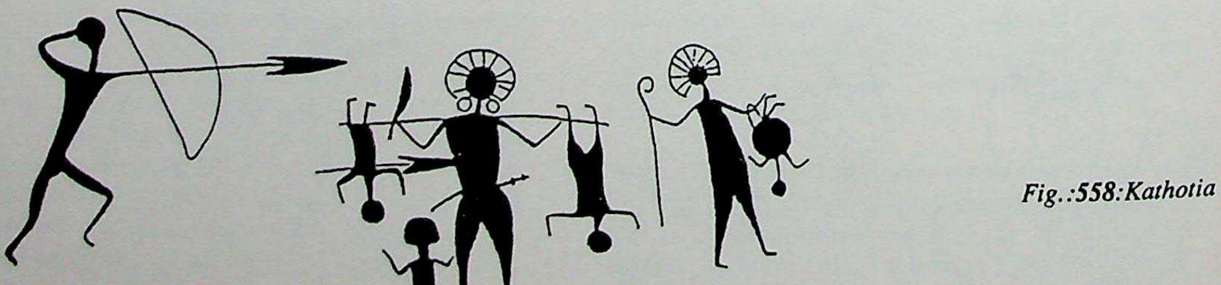


Fig.:558:Kathotia

Multiarmed gods or goddesses are also depicted in a large picture group at Kowar Khoh in the Mirzapur District of Uttar Pradesh (Figs.: 559-62). Two gods, with six legs and arms each belong to the retinue of a herculean hero, who tramples elephants beneath both his legs, while throwing two elephants with either hand in the air (Figs.: 559-61). To his entourage belongs a train of camels. The gods encounter big warriors, some of whom are mounted on elephants, while others are on foot (Figs.: 559-62). The subduer of the elephants is most probably Lorik, hero of a most popular epic which is still sung in the Bhojpuri-language region in the eastern parts of Central India (Crooke,W., 1896:251). But it should be kept in mind that during the early historic period there were many legends current, which would fit these pictures, and it would be most subjective to prefer one against another.

These large narrative scenes from the Kowar Khoh shelter, high up in the cliffs above the Son River, are stylistically comparable to the better known pictures from Likhanyia-Ahraura, in which several riders on elephants and horses are shown (Wakankar,V.S. & Brooks,R.R.R., 1976:83).

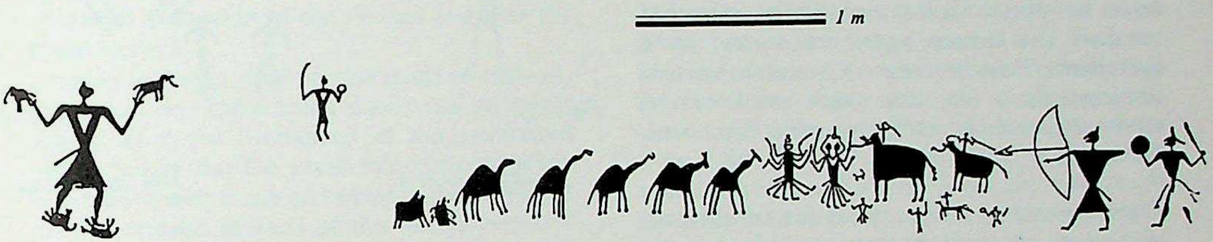


Fig.:559:Kowar Khoh

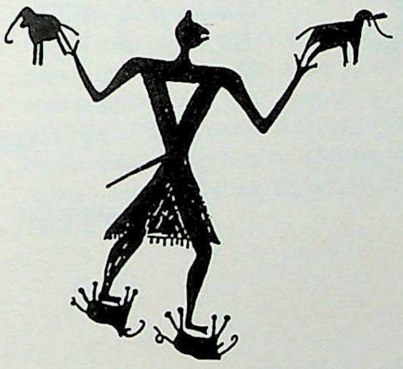


Fig.:560(from Fig.:559):Kowar Khoh

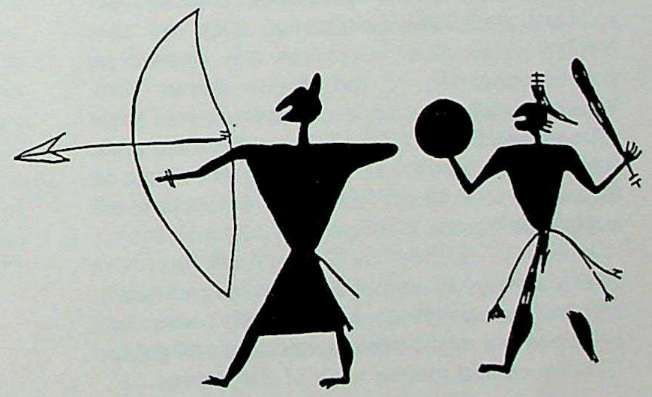


Fig.:562(from Fig.:559):Kowar Khoh

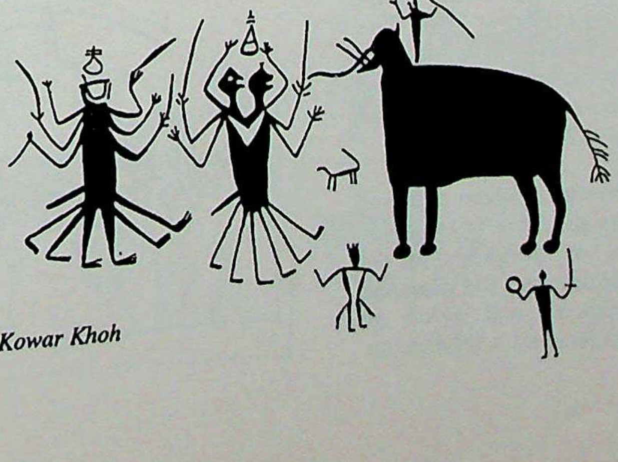


Fig.:561(from Fig.:559):Kowar Khoh

The search for Hindu or Buddhist elements in the narrative scenes of the rock pictures is, in my opinion a very questionable undertaking. Hinduism, as a socio-religious phenomenon, could be distinguished from other systems only after the codification of certain philosophical and ideological principles against the principles of the "other". Icons were often claimed by different sects and creeds. For this reason it is almost impossible to recognize certain figures as the exact illustration of their literary prototypes.

Heroes or elevated personalities or gods are already known from chalcolithic seals and sealings; their identification as "Hindu gods" will never be more than just a possibility as long as we lack the literary legend transmitted along with them. Pictorial narrative processes are only understandable in the very socio-cultural environment for which and in which they were fashioned.

That does not of course forbid the construction of models, which might throw more light on the use of these icons. The continuous scanning of these pictures will enlighten us about details which at some time or other will be important for a more plausible identification than we can furnish today. Such a process was involved in the identification of the Bhakta deities from Tikula, which --although discovered more than thirty years back-- could only be identified after the recognition of the plough in the hand of Balaram, and finally after the discovery of analogous figures at other sites.

In the analogy of iconographic features in early historic rock paintings with modern house wall paintings we might see a continuation of artistic techniques and maybe even of the themes.

At the site Chibbar Nulla several depictions of human figures exist, which show a man, carrying two people sitting in the baskets of a porterage yoke (Figs.: 563-4). Similar figures are applied even today in rural Malwa at a particular period before Deepawali, the Hindu New Year. This painting symbolizes Shravan Kumar, a mythological hero, who carries his aged and blind parents towards their *ashrama* at the banks of the Ganga (Figs.: 565-6,707).

The legend of Shravan Kumar is often depicted in early historic sculptures. This comparison between the depictions of Shravana in the courtly art at religious centers and the depiction of the same figure in rock-art and in folk art shows, that Indian art underwent a bifurcation, which becomes pronounced during the early historic period.

Fig.:563:Chibbar Nulla
Fig.:564:Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla

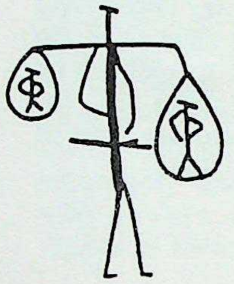


Fig.:563

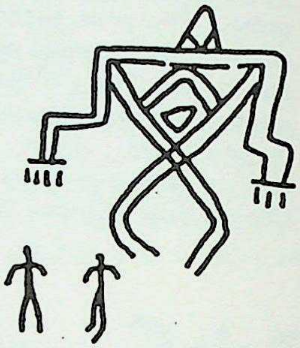


Fig.:564

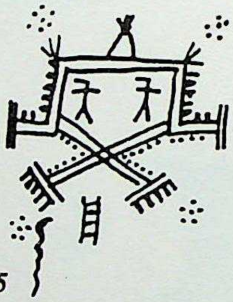


Fig.:565

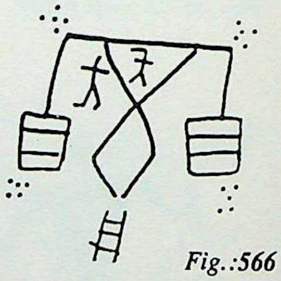


Fig.:566

Fig.:565:Bhanpura - Lodkhedi
Fig.:566:Runija
Fig.:567:Mathura

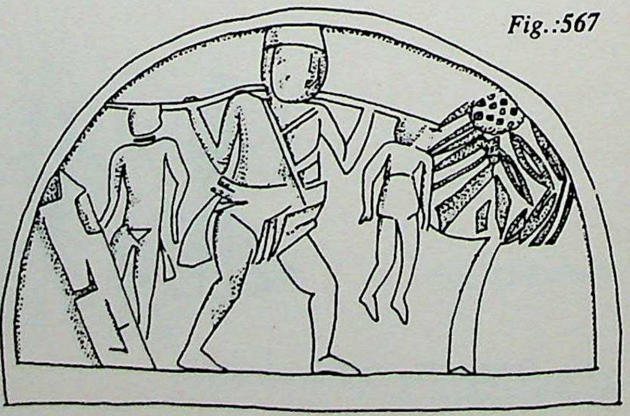


Fig.:567

Modern folk art still uses conventions, which were known even in the chalcolithic paintings if not earlier. Unlike urban-centered art, which was always open to other influences, according to the different winds of trade. The patronage of the courts vied with that of the early trading magnates and bankers, which brought forth art forms vastly different from traditional visual systems. Art had become an expression of prestige.

In Indian art history the time between the Harappan period and the imperial Mauryas is generally treated as an "artless" hiatus, a quasi dark period, which was only enlightened by the eastward expansion of the Persian and later the Greek culture.

Looking at Indian art from the point of rock-art, there was no visible break during this period. It seems as if the formations of the centralized Indian States and the social reformations which went along with these processes had little impact on the stylistic makeup of this art. Rock-art, it seems, had a social function, and was fashioned in a social environment, not directly influenced by the urban prestige art. Although the two social art regions drifted apart ever more, the interchange of elements was not prevented, nor could it be prevented.

In the rock-art of the Mahadeo Hills we encounter persons riding fabulous animals, strongly reminiscent of the *makrama* figures (Figs.: 680-2), --composite beings with parts of the body resembling fish or snakes, cows, horses or rams-- which are so common in early Buddhist reliefs (Fig.:567).

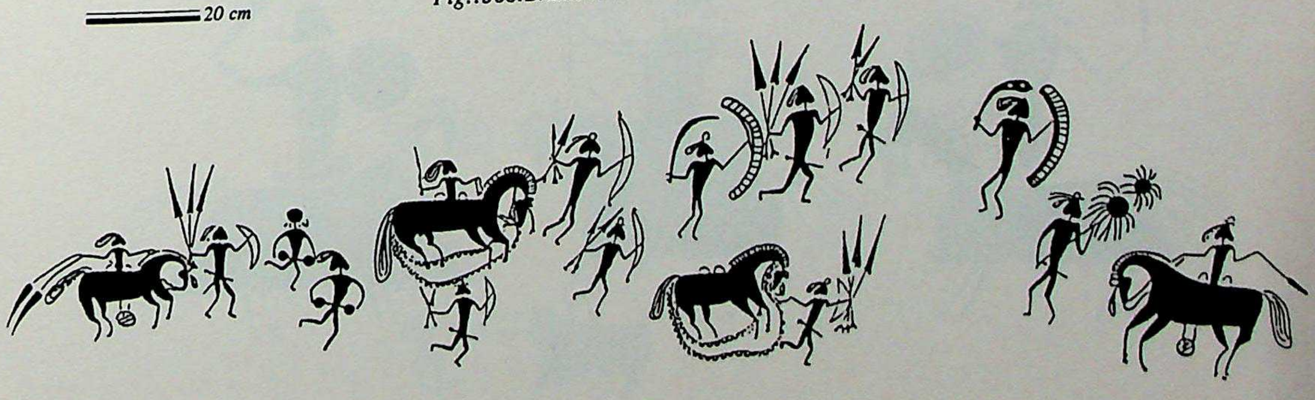
Although there seems to be no obvious break in the stylistic tradition between the chalcolithic pictures and the early historic picture groups, we note more thematic emphasis on the depiction of fighting. Fighting between persons mounted on horses as well as on foot, armed with swords and shields are the outstanding themes of the rock pictures from now on. Horse-riders armed with swords and infantry fighters are seen in almost all the rock-art sites where pictures from the historic period are available.

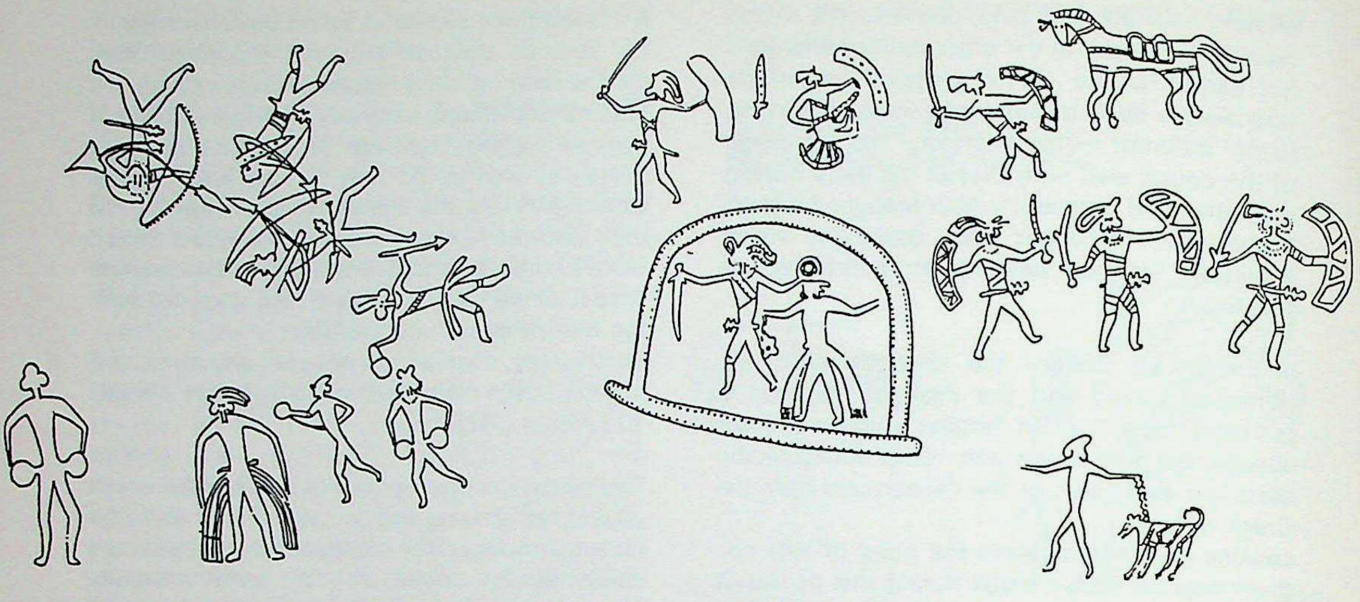
Surprisingly, chariots are not seen any more, and bullock carts are exceptionally rare (Figs.: 412,453-4,669).

The many war scenes do not indicate the cause of war, or at least not in such a way as to be understandable. The antagonistic groups are almost always armed with the same weapons. The standard armour is the sword and the shield (Figs.: 569-71). The riders are armed with swords, in rare cases with bows and arrows. At the sites close to Bhopal riders are shown with a weapon consisting of a lash held in the middle with two spearhead-like blades at either end (Figs.: 568,577). The impact of this weapon must have been terrible, and it seems strange that no other source reveals this whip-like instrument.

Horses are sometimes caparisoned for decoration or protection (Figs.: 570,573,575). The draperies of the horses consist of the reins which lead to the bit (Figs.: 568-80,620-6). Saddles consist of a bow construction, fastened by girth, breast strap and breeching (Figs.: 569,576). Stirrups are never shown, but this is in accordance with early horse depictions in sculptures, which do not show true stirrups either.

Fig.:568:Bhimbetka





20 cm

Fig.:569:Bhimbetka

20 cm

Fig.:570:Gelpur

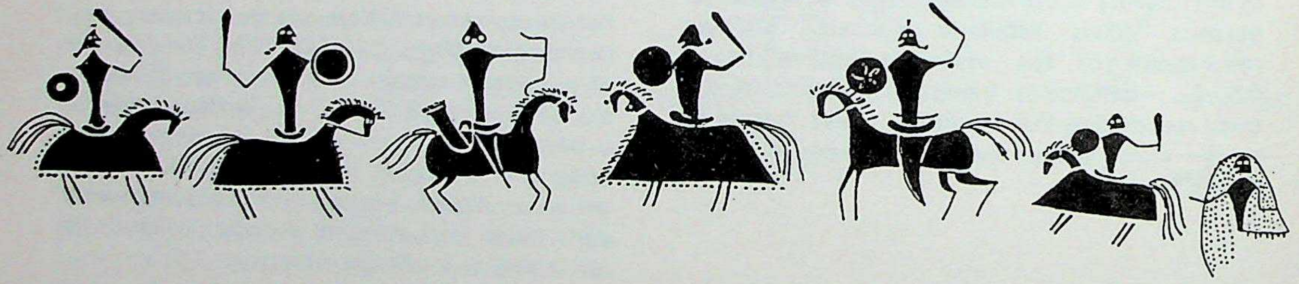
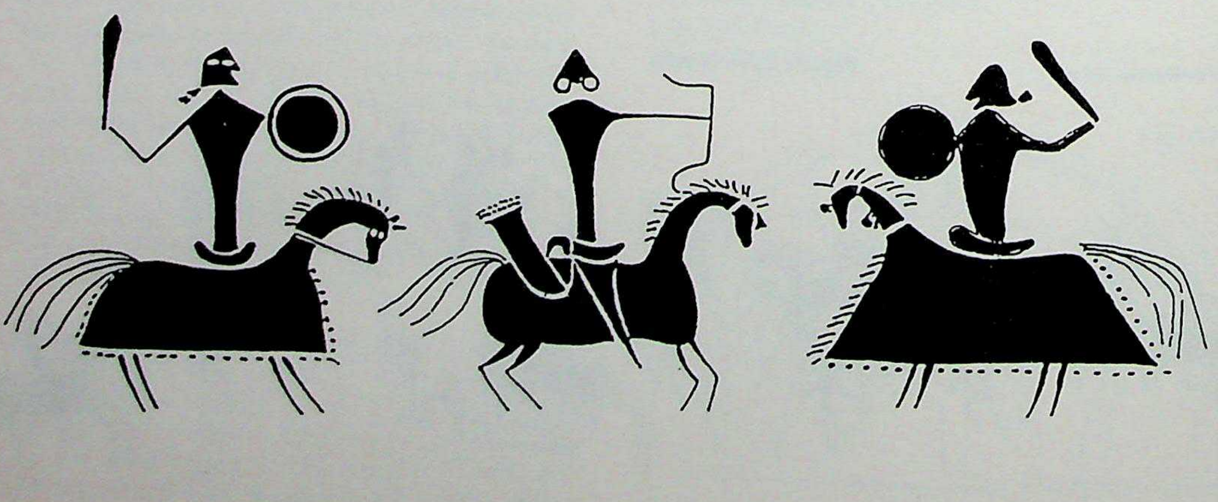


Fig.:571(From Fig.:570):Gelpur



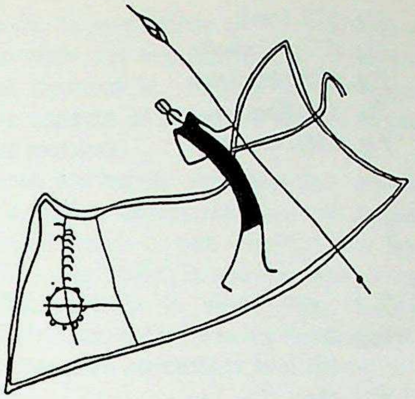


Fig.:572:Urden

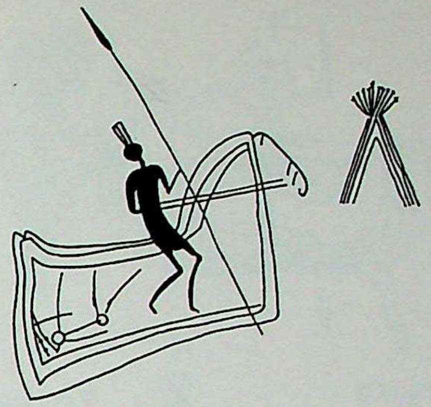


Fig.:574:Urden

Fig.:573:Urden

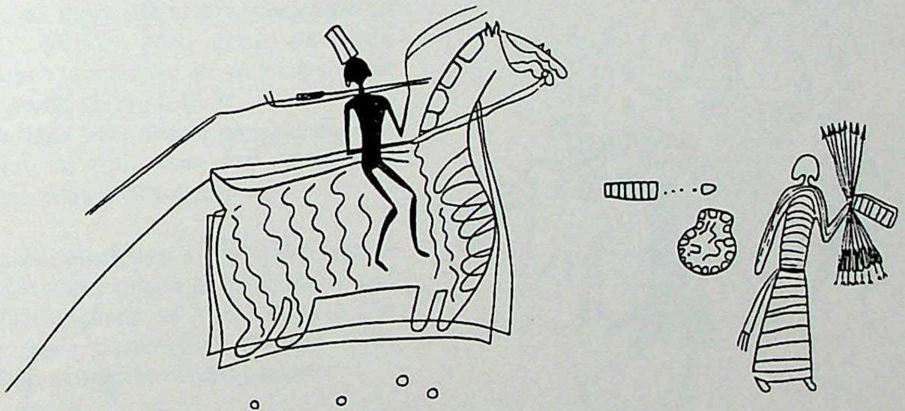


Fig.:575:Firengi

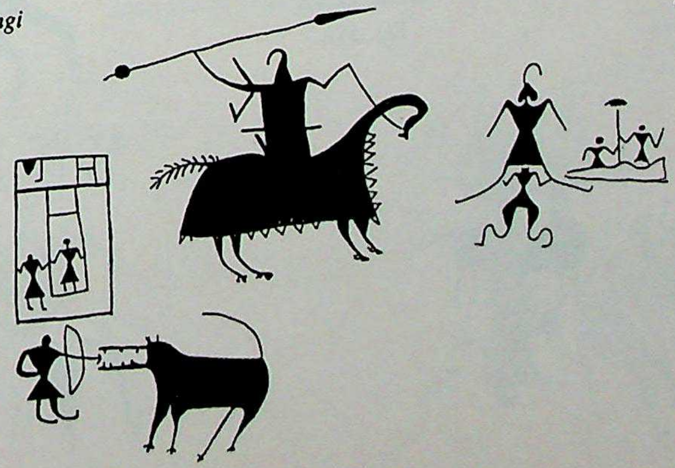


Fig.:576:Jaora
Fig.:577:Bhimbetka
Fig.:578:Bhimbetka
Fig.:579:Kharwai
Fig.:580:Pattadkal

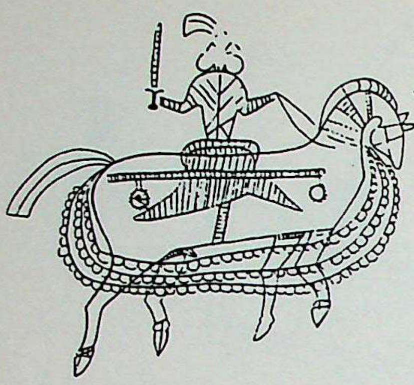


Fig.:576 20 cm

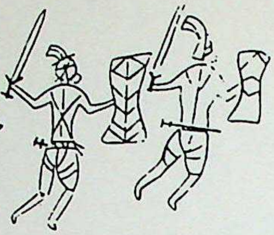


Fig.:578 20 cm

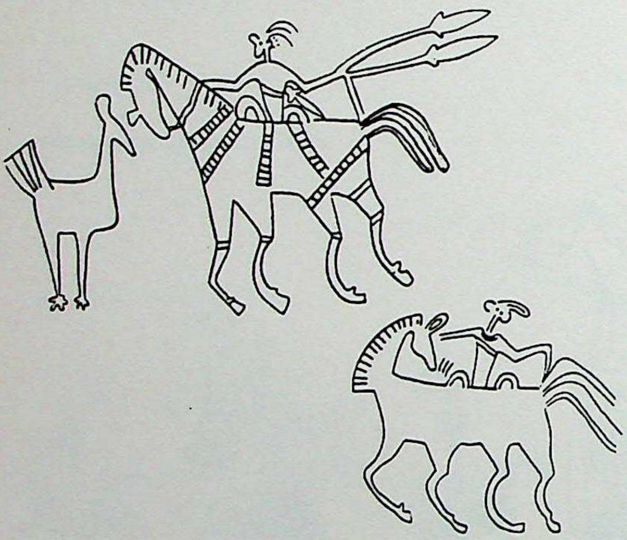


Fig.:577 20 cm

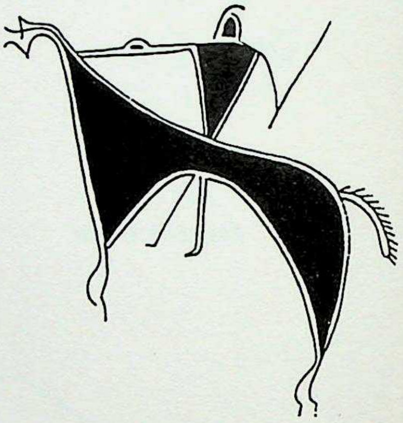
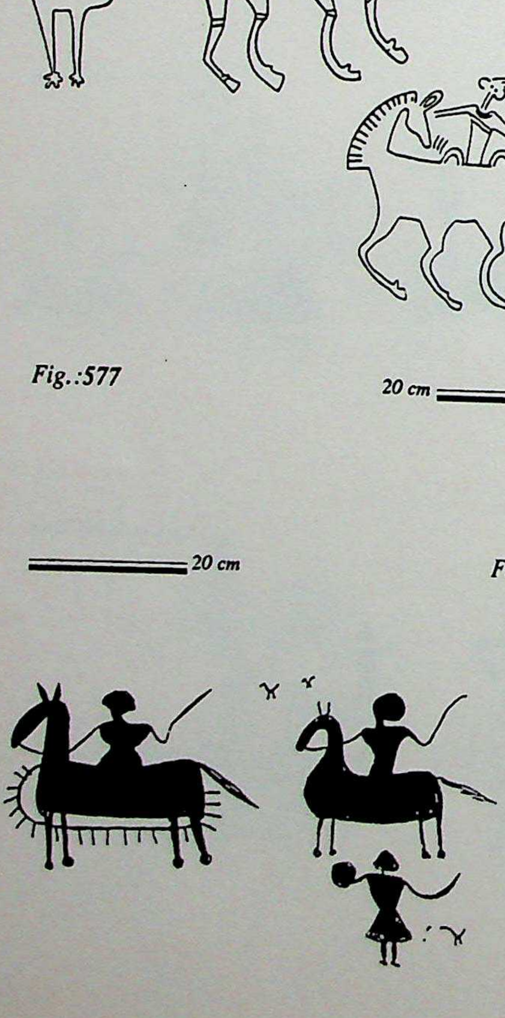
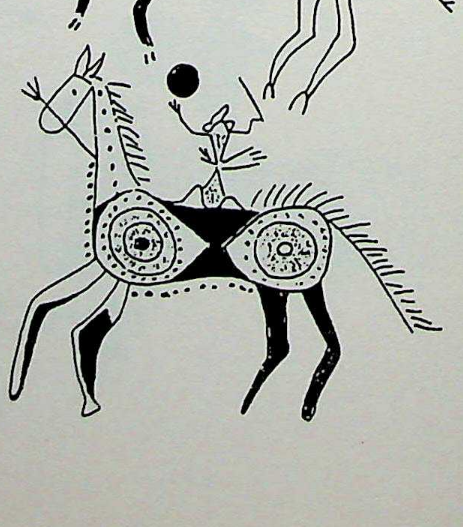


Fig.:579 20 cm

20 cm ***Fig.:580***





Since a large number of historic rock pictures deals with war and fights, the information from these pictures is limited to the martial arts. Many aspects of everyday life are missing from these pictures.

Women are hardly ever depicted, and from the few available depictions their real status cannot be understood. In one instance, the figure of a woman (Fig.: 581) is shown close to a group of warriors drawn in detail (Fig.: 570-1). This woman holds a parrot in her hand, and is flanked by diminutive attendants or children.

Only within this rock-art style, which was labelled "Kushana style" do we see depictions of activities apart from war (Figs.: 573,584-9). How and by whom this style was brought forth is not known. It is possible that nomadic tribes with cultural affiliations to peoples from North-West India fashioned these paintings.

However, these pictures are masterpieces of early pictorial art in India.

In these pictures there are several depictions of hunts (Figs.: 585-9). The prey are large mammals, boars, antelopes as well as smaller animals like lizards (Figs.: 588-9).

But there are also very fine depictions of wild animals which do not show any relation to hunting groups (Figs.: 590-4,595-604).

In these paintings we see a dynamism which recalls the animal depictions of the hunters and gatherers. The figures of the humans, in contrast, are more stereotyped, but also more naturalistic than in the mesolithic pictures.

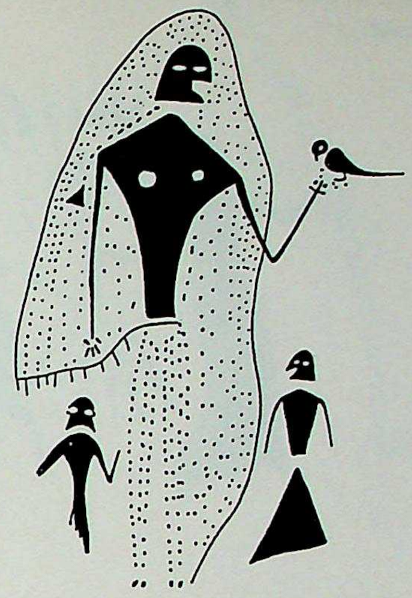


Fig.:581:Gelpur

Fig.:584:Urden

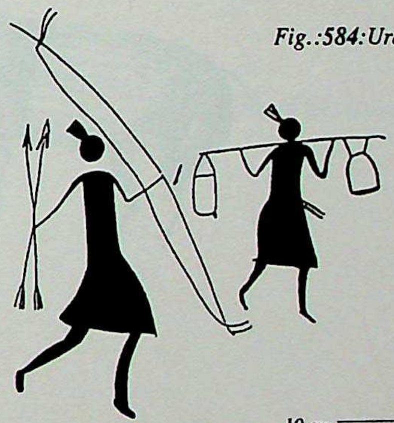


Fig.:582:Gelpur

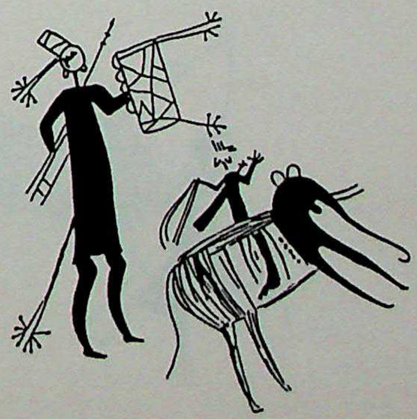


Fig.:583:Firengi

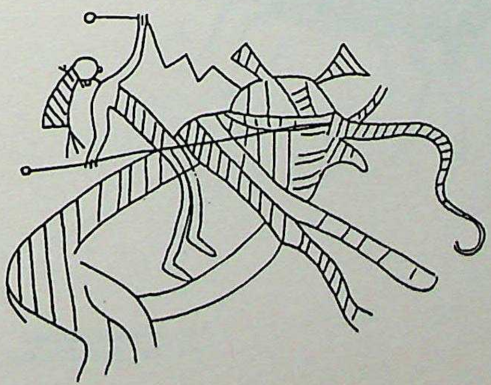


Fig.:585:Satkunda

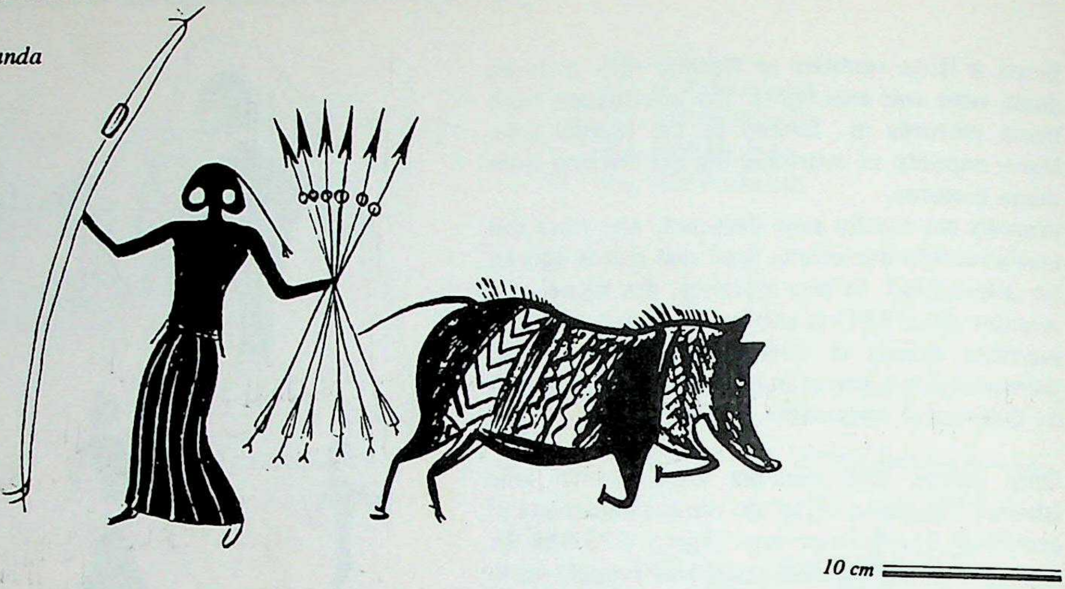


Fig.:586:Chiklod

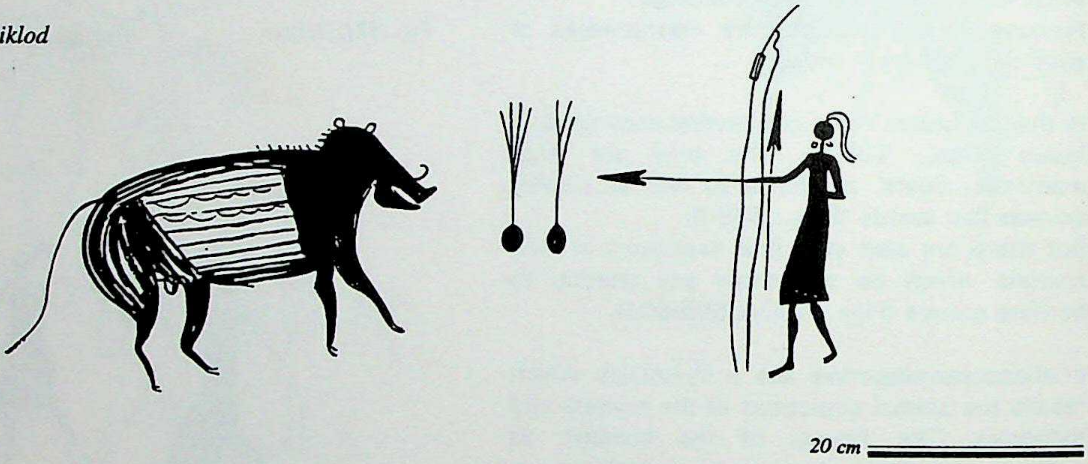
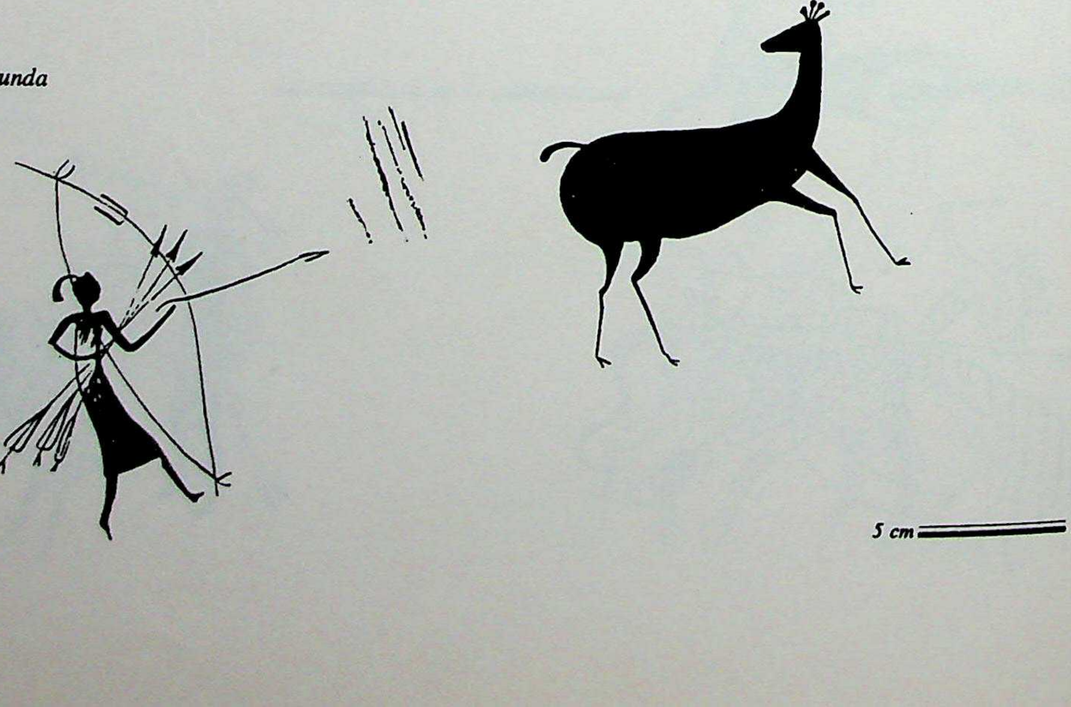


Fig.:587:Satkunda



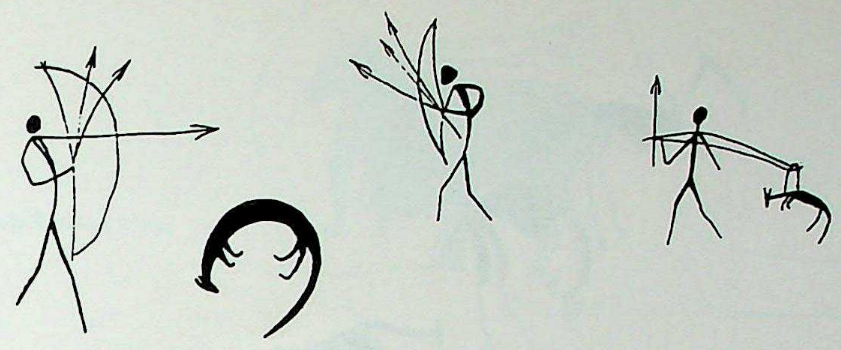


Fig.:588:Satkunda

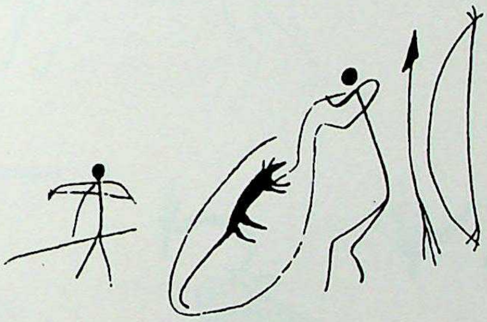


Fig.:589:Satkunda

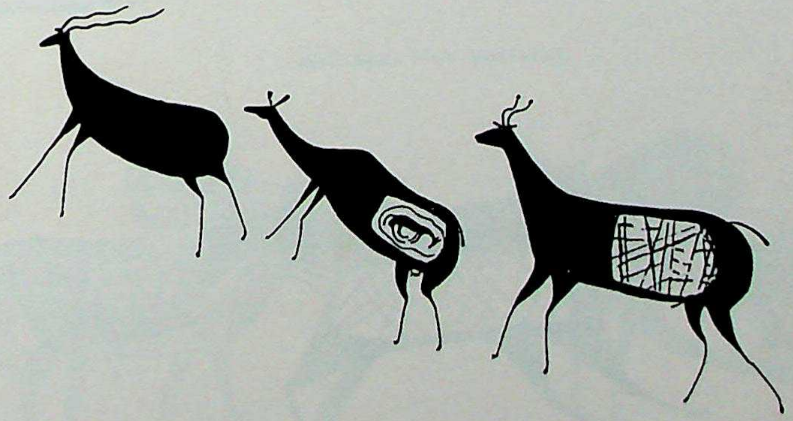


Fig.:590:Satkunda

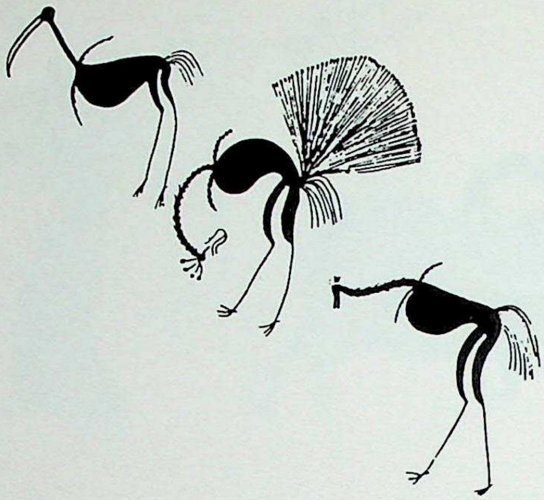


Fig.:591:Satkunda

10 cm

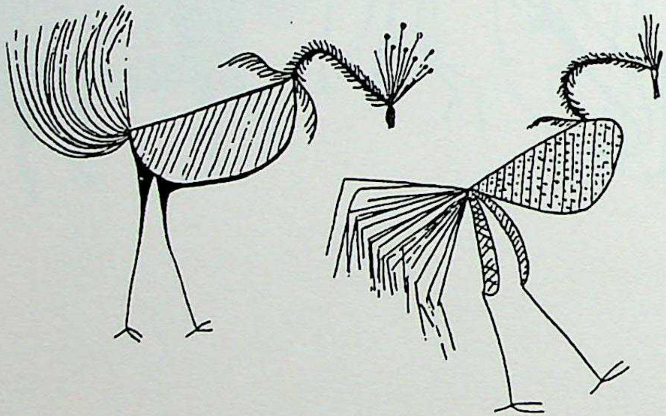


Fig.:592:Jaora

20 cm

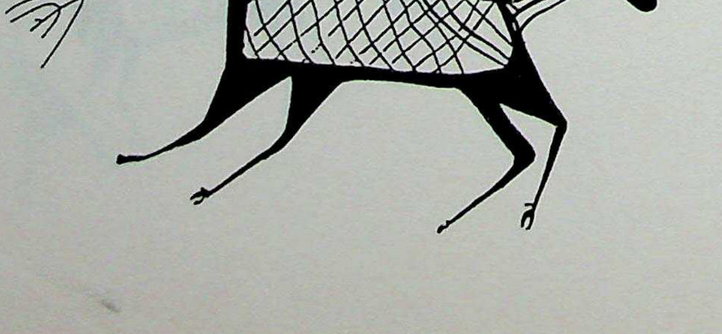


Fig.:593:Bhimbetka

10 cm

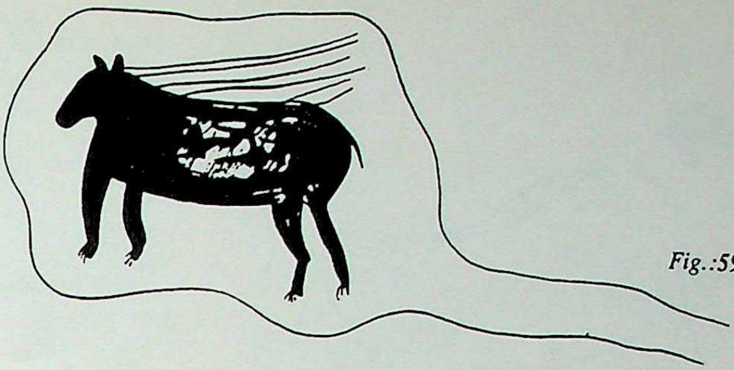


Fig.:594

Fig.:595

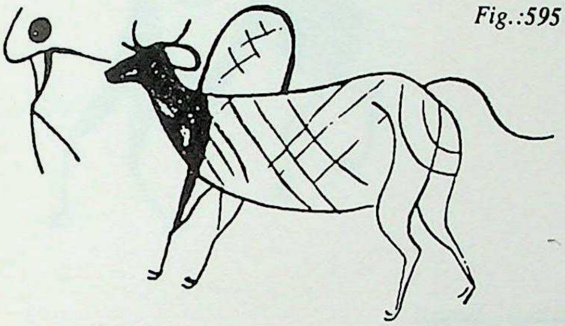


Fig.:594:Satkunda
Fig.:595:Satkunda
Fig.:596:Narsinghgarh - Hinglaj Mata
Fig.:597:Firengi
Fig.:598:Jaora

Fig.:596

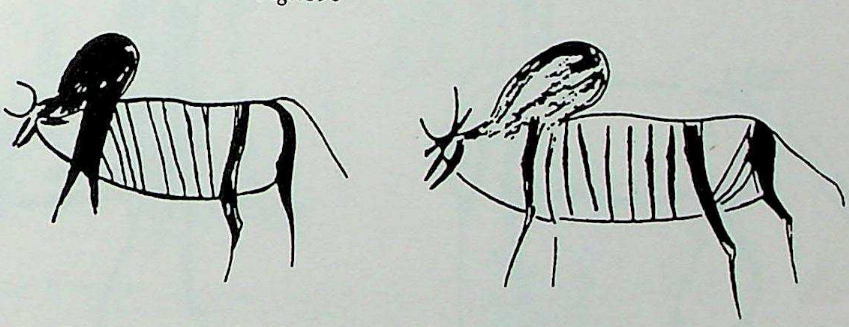
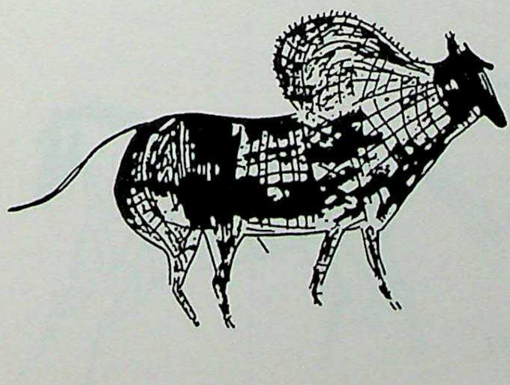


Fig.:597

Fig.:598



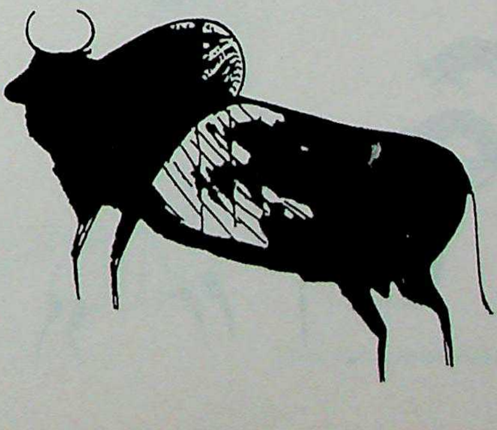


Fig.:599:Bhimbetka
Fig.:600:Satkunda
Fig.:601:Satkunda
Fig.:602:Satkunda
Fig.:603:Satkunda
Fig.:604:Satkunda

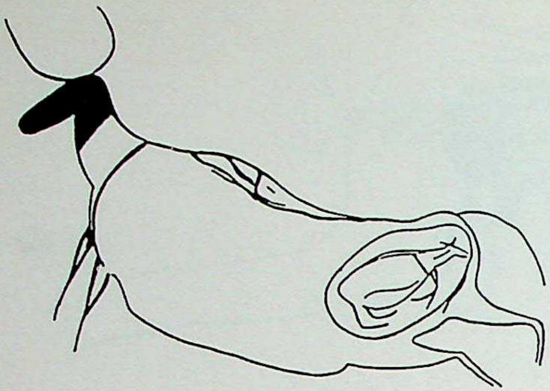


Fig.:599

Fig.:601

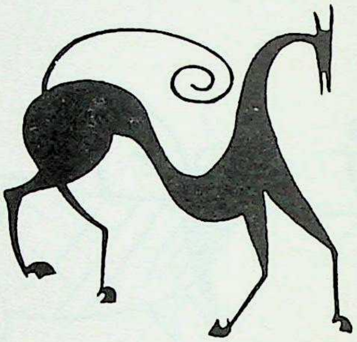
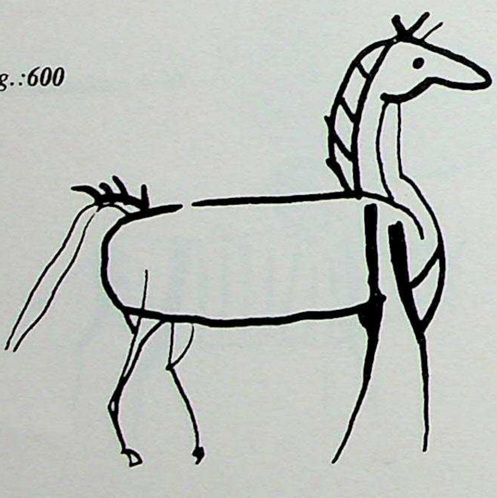


Fig.:600



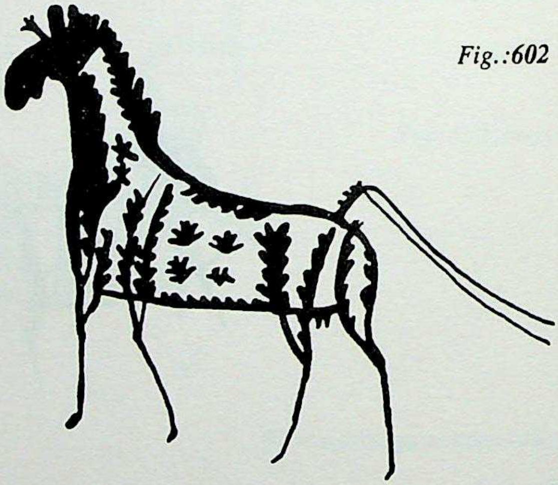


Fig.:602

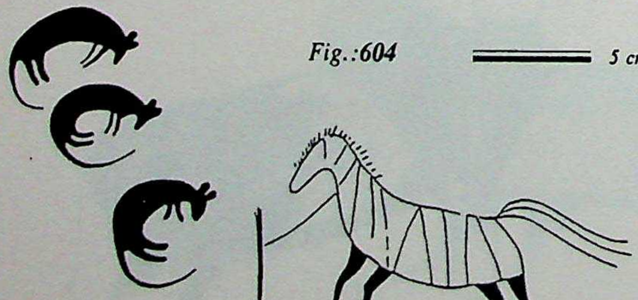


Fig.:604

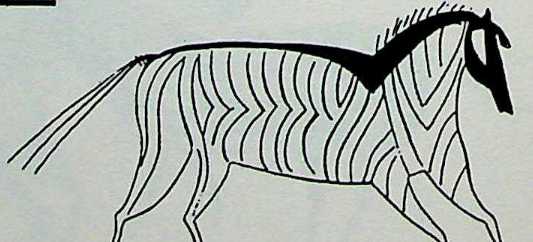


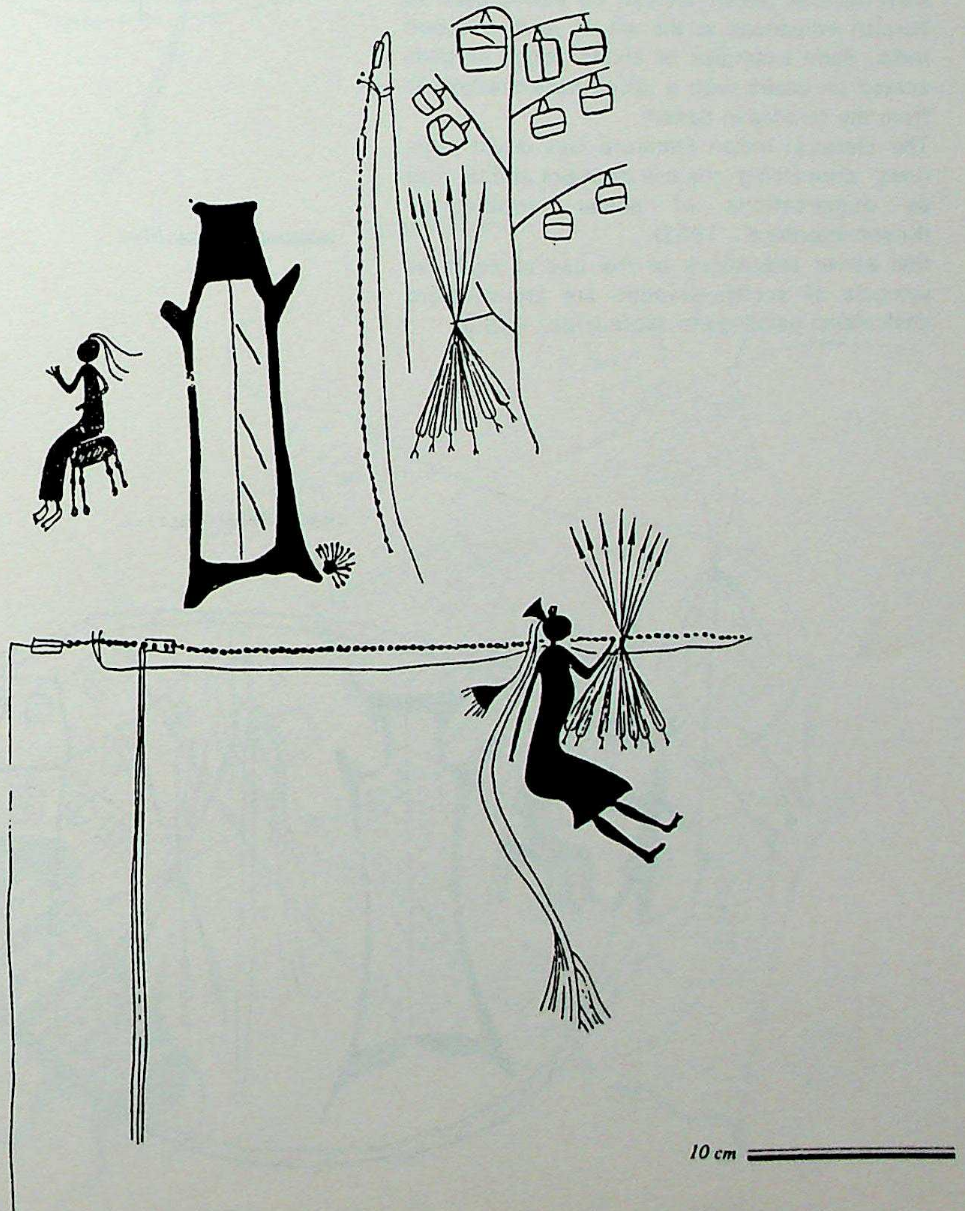
Fig.:603

In these "Kushana pictures" the clothing shown is quite detailed. Then dress style is surprisingly different from that shown in rock-art of that period, which basically shows only non-stitched clothes, such as dhoties and maybe sarees.
But in these paintings men are dressed in kaftan-like shirts (Figs.: 582,584-7,605-8) reaching below the middle, while the lower part of the body is wrapped in a *lungi* (Fig.: 585).
The headdresses look like rather elaborate hats with tassels or other decorations (Figs.: 582-3), very similar to the caps which are still worn by Ladakhis nowadays.

Decorative bands and tassels are a typical flourishes in these pictures. Tassels decorate not only clothes but also weapons.

The extremely long bow is the common shown weapon of the man. These bows are at times twice the height of the owner (Figs.: 584-9,605-7). The bows are carried unstressed placed over the shoulder. The arrows are held bundled in one hand and are equipped with triangular flanged points while the other end is notched. The fletchings are intricately shown (Figs.: 585,587,605-7).

*Fig.:**605**:Satkunda*



Bow and bundled arrows are a repetitive element in these pictures, and seem to play a central role in several such scenes found at the site of Satkunda and Kaharwai. In these, one person is enthroned on a four-legged seat, which is placed before a cow hide and a tree (Figs.: 605,606-9). On the branches of this tree are hung bundles of arrows and some kind of parcels. Besides the tree is placed the long decorated bow. Several of these pictures are encircled by a line or a double line, which might indicate a demarcated space or a shelter. In one picture, at the opening of this enclosure stands a guardian holding a standard. It is obvious that this scene refers to a mythological or sacred, ceremonial space.

Depictions of enthroned heroes, kings or gods in early historic Indian art can be traced back to Persian influences in the art of North-Western India. Early examples of chiefs, kings or gods seated on chairs with a raised back are known from the *toranas* in Sanchi.
The classical Indian literature lays down strict rules concerning the use of chairs and thrones as demarcations of social stratification (Krishnamurthy,K., 1982).
Still earlier indications of the use of seats as symbols of social elevation are known from chalcolithic paintings in Jaora (Figs.: 428-9).

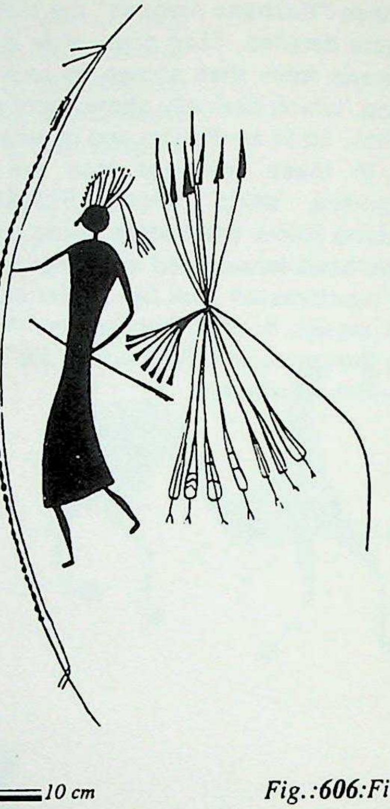


Fig.:606:Firengi

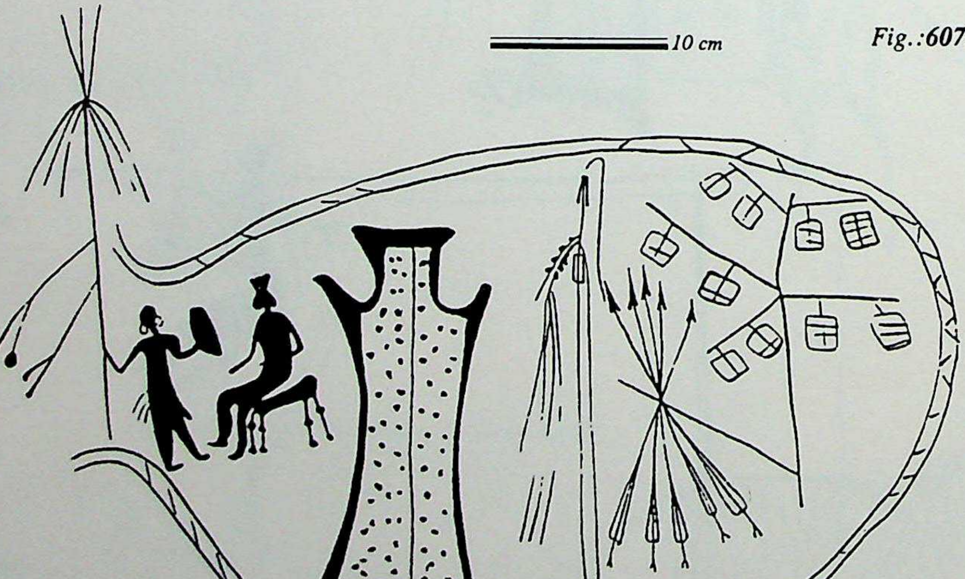


Fig.:607:Satkunda

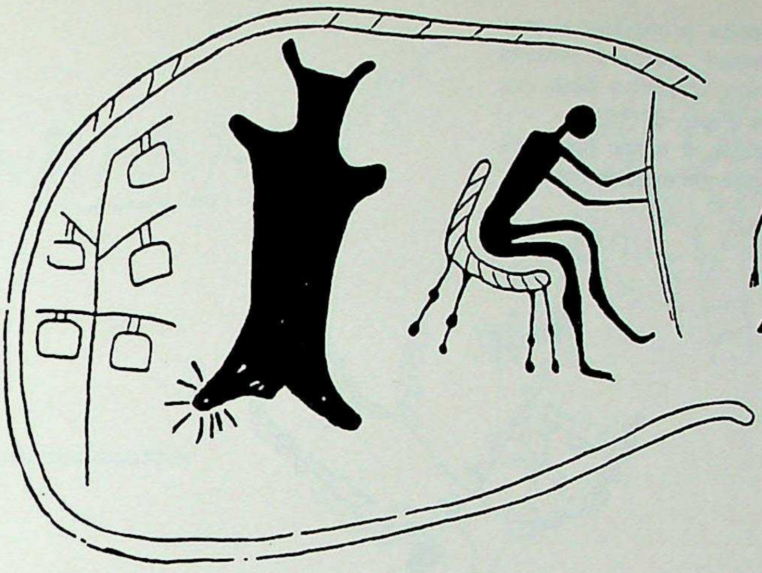
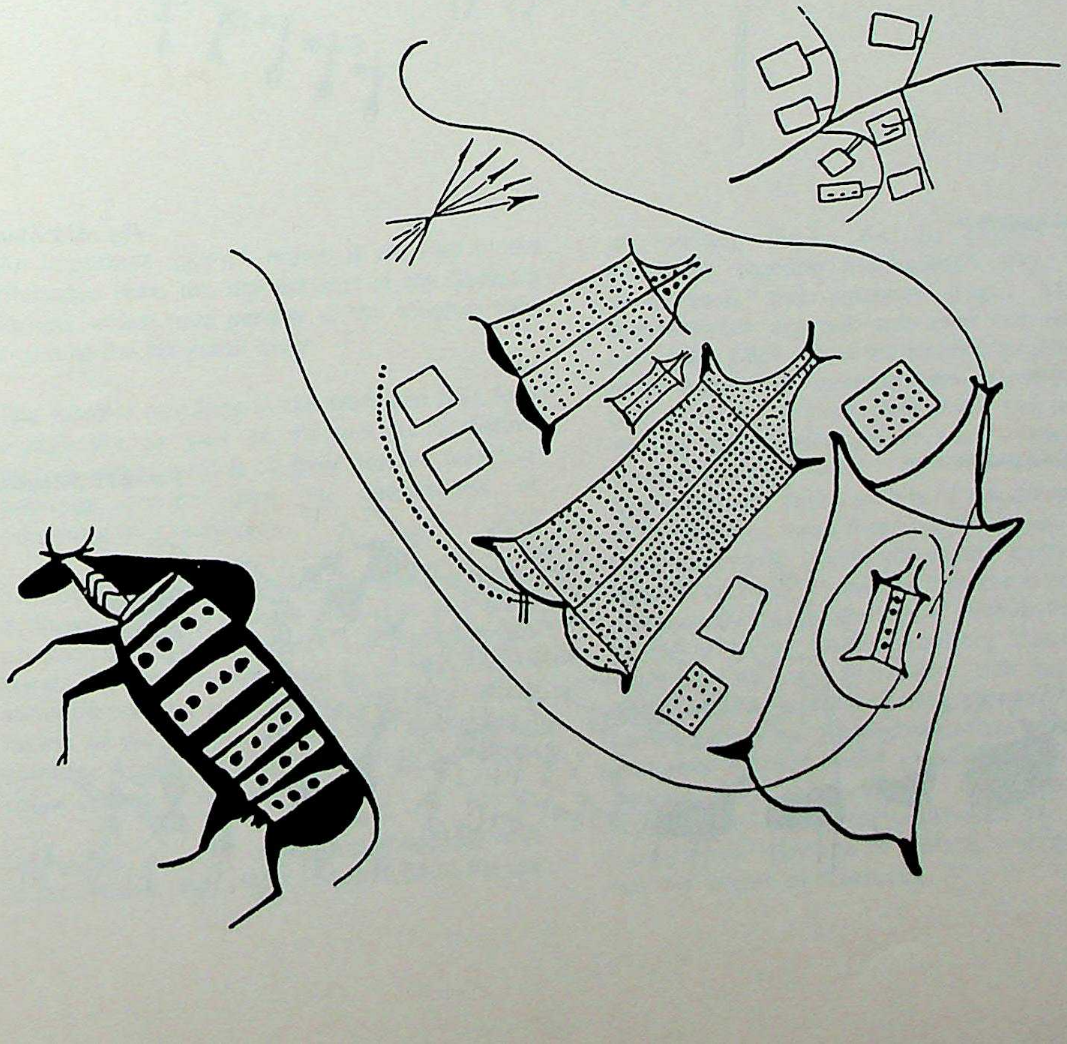


Fig.:608:Satkunda

Fig.:609:Kharwai



In the historic rock paintings, procession scenes of horse-riders and armed warriors arrayed around trees are common. Perching birds are often sitting on branches (Figs.: 610-2).
Trees as centres of religious or magic functions are still a very common phenomenon in India.

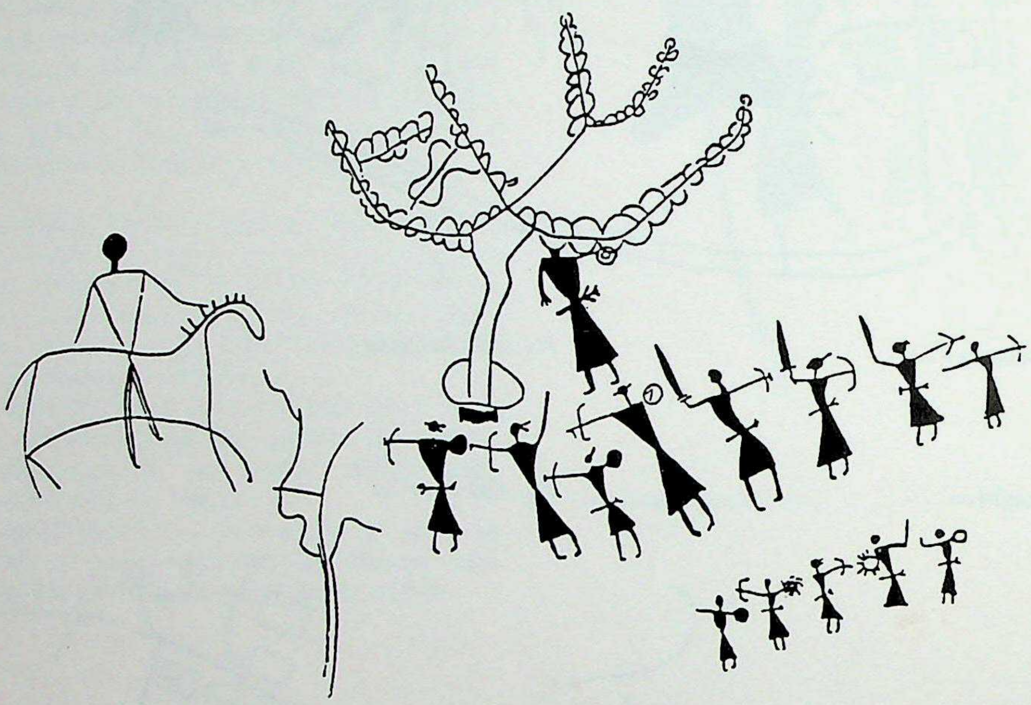


*Fig.:**610**:Jaora*

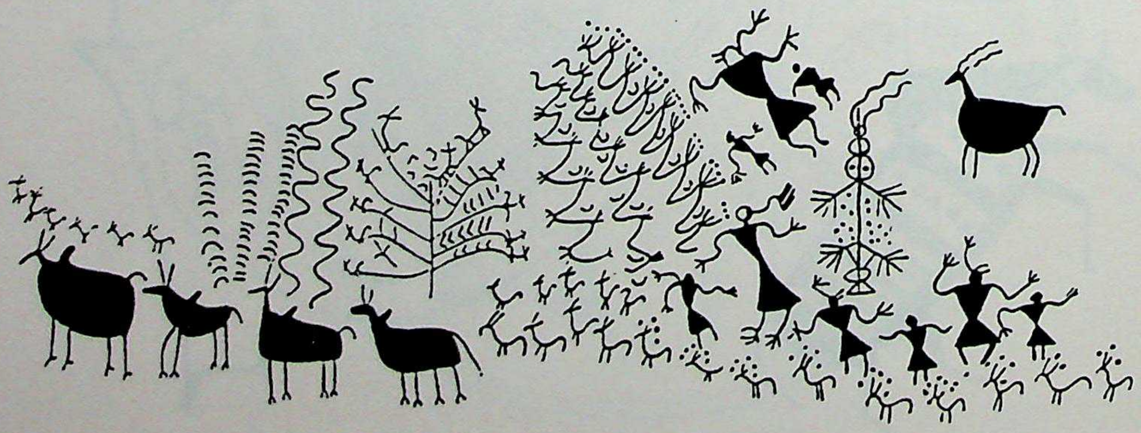


*Fig.:**611**:Satkunda*

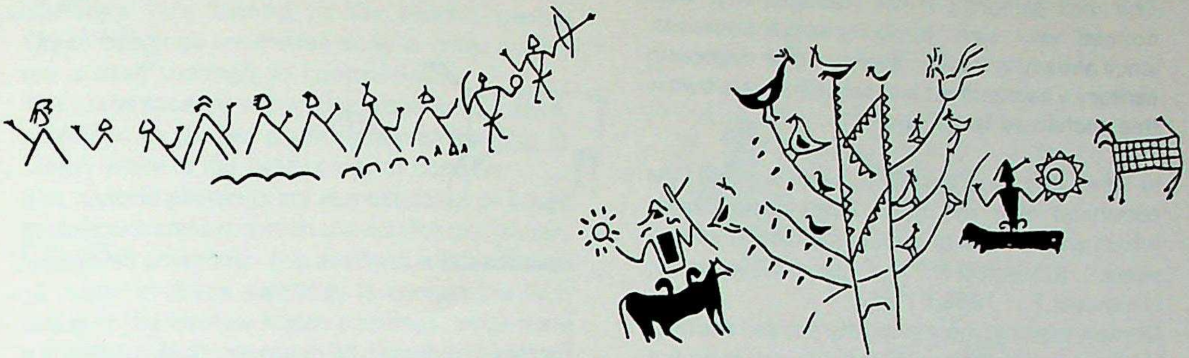


Fig.:612:Bangawan

An important rock-art region is situated in the Mahadeo Hills, the highest part of the Sattpura Range, which runs parallel to the Vindhya Hills south of the Narmada River.

The historic paintings in the Mahadeo Hills form stylistically as well as thematically a distinct picture group, which by their detailed narrative painting groups give us descriptions of contemporary technology.

The analysis of the technological features shown in these paintings make it clear that they are a product of the historic period. These paintings surely do not depict the life of nomadic or seminomadic cave dwellers, but rather show facets of the life of a people who possessed a complex material culture as well as a complex social organization.

Depictions of well constructed houses with several rooms (Figs.: 618,634,637,640), the use of furniture (Figs.: 641-3), pottery (Figs.: 634,661), rotating hand-mills(?) (Fig.: 634), metal tools and weapons (Figs.: 618-20), domesticated animals and even two-wheeled carts (Fig.: 669), show the technological abilities of the people who created these paintings.
Still, it is not known who were the peoples leaving these paintings in such inaccessible shelters and rock walls.
At the plateau, in the vicinity of the cantonment of Panchmarhi, exist five rock-cut caves, which were excavated during the Gupta period. The name "Panchmarhi" derives from the local name of these five caves which is "Panch Pandava Madhi" (Tourist Traffic Advisory Committee, 1962:5). It is more than likely, that during the Gupta period Panchmarhi was already a widely known sanctuary. Today thousands of pilgrims visit several spots in the vicinity of Panchmarhi during the festivals of Shivaratri and Nagpanchami. The rock paintings in several caves close to places of worship are obviously not the object of reverence.

The rock paintings in the Mahadeo Hills were noticed very early by European antiquarians, since already in the last quarter of the nineteenth century a cantonment and sanatoria were built in this enchanted landscape.

In the thirties Colonel D.H.Gordon got the command over the Small Arms School here, which enabled him to explore the hills for several years (Gordon,D.H., see Bibliography; Neumayer,E., 1985:67-82).
Gordon explored more than fifty painted shelters. He classified this material according to style and stratigraphic considerations. Based on these studies he developed four --later five-- series according to which he postulated a continuous stylistic development, allocating to every style a particular number of years. Gordon concluded that these five series comprised the time-span between 700 B.C. till A.D.1 000 (Gordon D.H., 1939:5).

On account of the nature of the rock-art in the Mahadeo Hills --and this was the only rock-art region which Gordon knew thoroughly-- Gordon did not shed his preconceived ideas about the antiquity of Indian prehistory and Indian art as a whole. He came to the conclusion that "...none of the Indian Rock Art is of considerable antiquity" (Gordon,D.H., 1958:98).

Today I know of about 100 shelters in the Mahadeo Hills which can be compared with several thousand in the Vindhya Hills. It is clear now that the early rock-art in the Mahadeo Hills is contemporaneous with the rock-art in the Vindhyas. In the chapter on the pictures of the hunters and gatherers I have mentioned the well preserved polychrome paintings from the Mahadeo Hills (Figs.: 34,45,50,53,70,75,198-9,179,192).

Rock pictures of the chalcolithic period are absent in the Mahadeo Hills. No explanation for this is possible in the absence of further archaeological research. There are only two pictures showing a superficial stylistic affinity with chalcolithic paintings from the Vindhya Hills (Figs.: 613-4).

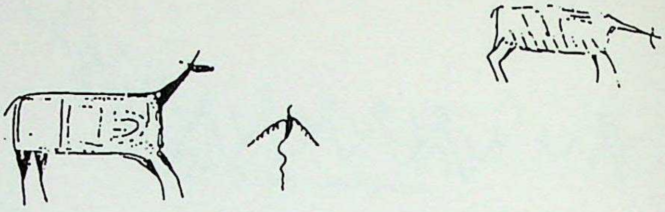


Fig.:613

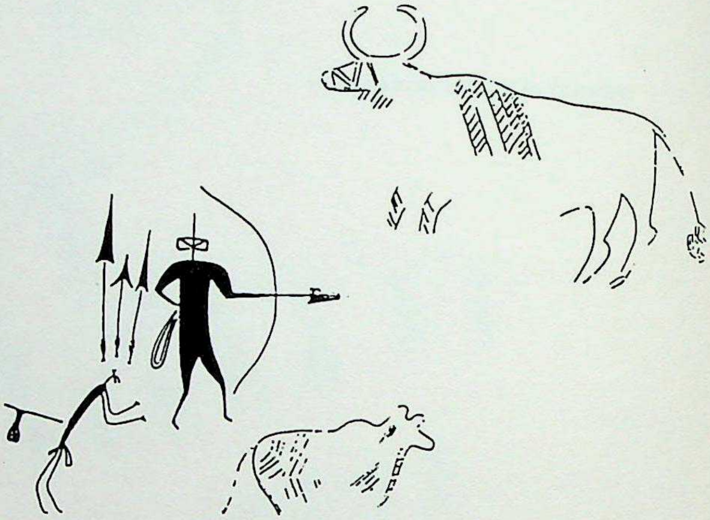


Fig.:614

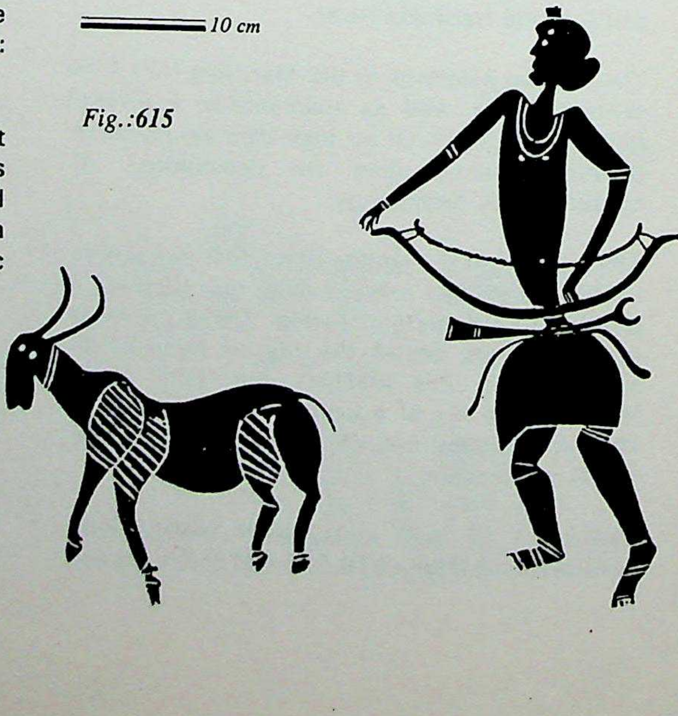


Fig.:615

Fig.:613:Mahadeo Hills - Marodeo
Fig.:614:Mahadeo Hills - Marodeo
Fig.:615:Mahadeo Hills - Agamdwar

By far the largest part of the rock paintings in the Mahadeo Hills belong to the historic period. These paintings are mostly done in white colour; red is used sparingly as contour lines.
The preference for the white colour is most easily explained by the red pigmentation of the rock, to which white is the best colour of contrast.
The historic paintings are in most cases of a high technical standard, which shows that the painters were well practised. The aesthetic sophistication of many of these paintings is comparable with some of the famous fresco paintings, while there are some which are rough and obviously painted with a heavy hand.

In some of the historic pictures the painters tried unusual perspective possibilities. Several show faces of the figures and other features in a three-quarter perspective (Figs.: 616,629,637-9,641). The second --invisible-- eye is placed over the facial contour line. Hands and fingers in these rock paintings are often minutely executed (Figs.: 615-7,629-30).
The legs and feet are very stereotyped, but muscles, heels and toes are at times portrayed in a very naturalistic manner.
Weapons and tools are shown in great detail (Figs.: 615,617-21,624,629,632,642). Daggers and swords conform to a particular type.The hilts of the daggers and swords are particularly detailed (Figs.: 615,617-21,624,629,632,642). The blades of swords as well as daggers are straight and only slightly flanged towards the hilt. Intensive archaeological research could verify the finer chronology of these pictures.

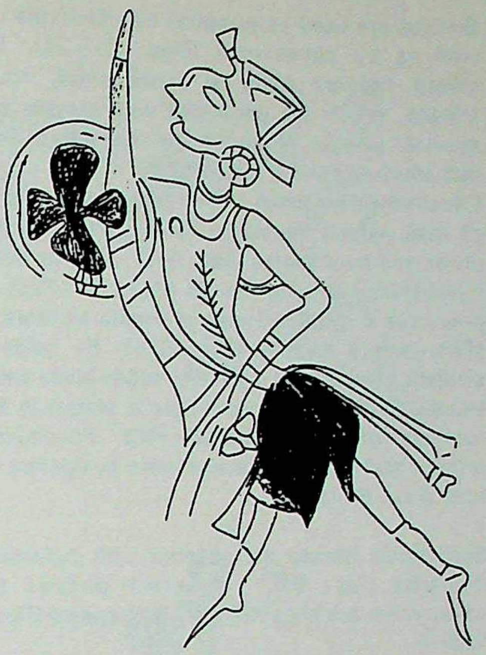


Fig.:617

Fig.:616

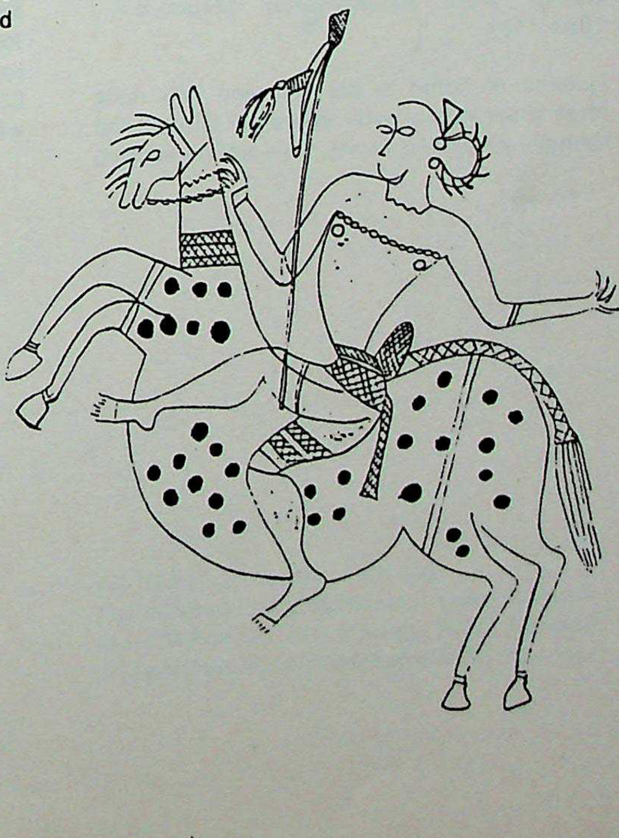


Fig.:616:Mahadeo Hills - Bori East
Fig.:617:Mahadeo Hills - Bori East

Swords are used as weapons by infantrymen as well as by cavalrymen (Figs.: 618-24). The sword fighters carry at times small, round shields, which are decorated with tassels, and several shields seem to be decorated with individual designs (Figs.: 617-9).
Cavalrymen are often shown protected by a coat of mail, which seems to have been protective chest and back-plates (Fig.: 620), at other times it is a shirt with long sleeves (Figs.: 624,626). In one case a mounted warrior wears trousers, a shirt, and a helmet (Fig.: 624). He holds a straight sword with a parallel edged blade and a truncated tip. This sword-type is unique in the rock-art of the Mahadeo Hills. Poncho-like armour and helmets are also worn by fighters on foot (Fig.: 617).

Sometimes horses are covered with protective draperies (Fig.: 620). In several pictures the cavalrymen are shown armed with spears (Figs.: 625-6).
The style of the horses as well as their equipment is comparable to the depictions of horses and horse-trappings in the historic paintings of the Vindhya Region. The depictions of the horse's trappings are detailed enough to allow the conclusion that the horses were controlled by bits; the saddles were most probably a construction from bent-wood, stirrups are totally absent. Warriors mounted on elephants are not depicted in the vicinity of Panchmarhi, but a few such depictions are known from Churnagundi (Bajpai,S.K., 1984:159).

Pictures of fights in the Mahadeo Hills quite often show victims with spears run through and through, or pinned down, with arrows sticking through their necks (Figs.: 622,627). This contrasts strongly with the fighting scenes in the Vindhya Hills, where the victimization of foes is never shown.

Fighting-axes are rarely shown, but since there are a few very detailed depictions give us a good idea of their form and fastening (Figs.: 618,621,630,624). The rectangular axe-head is connected to the shaft by a relatively thin rod (Fig.: 630).

But the standard weapon of fighters in the Mahadeo Hills is the bow and arrow. The bow is frequently shown detailed enough to understand that the sinew was prepared from a bamboo-splinter, which was fastened to the bow by a flexible string (Figs.: 615,618,622,630). This shows that the construction of the bow was basically the same as for bows still used by many Indian tribal people today.
The arrows are equipped with triangular flanged arrow-heads. The other end is shown notched, with fletchings for flight stabilization (Figs.: 630,706). The arrows were carried head down in a conical quiver which was slung over the neck and shoulder (Figs.: 618,666,690). In two instances there is a small "side-quiver", in which arrows were placed as well, and attached to the larger one (Figs.: 623,631,685). Possibly arrows had to be "made ready" for use, and the "side-quiver" was the receptacle for the usable ones. During fights or during hunts the bowmen always held two or three arrows bundled together with the bow. In one instance a battle-axe is kept in the quiver as well (Fig.: 630). Quivers, like shields are often decorated with tassels.

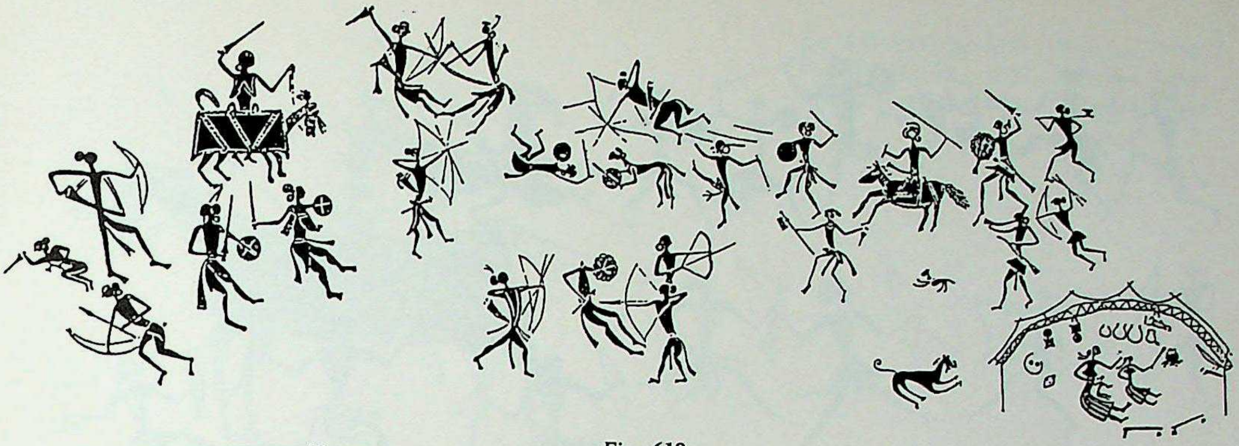


Fig.:618

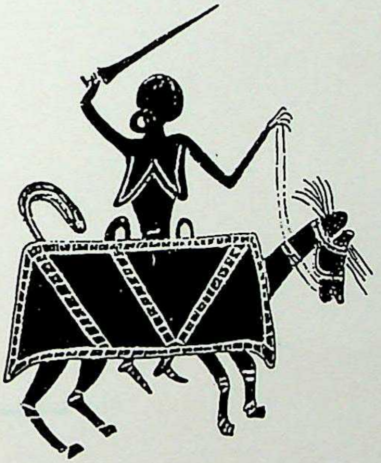


Fig.:620

Fig.:621

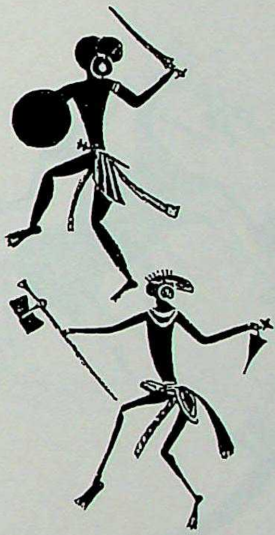


Fig.:619

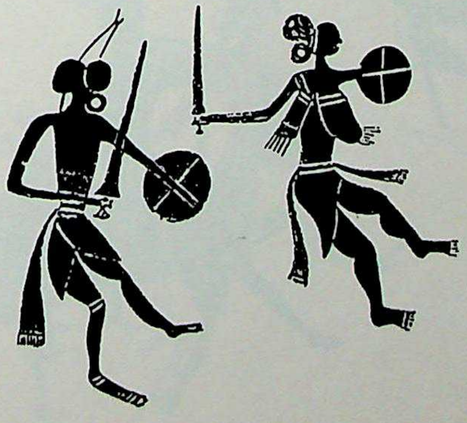


Fig.:618:Mahadeo Hills - Marodeo
Fig.:619(from Fig.:618):Mahadeo Hills - Marodeo
Fig.:620(from Fig.:618):Mahadeo Hills - Marodeo
Fig.:621(from Fig.:618):Mahadeo Hills - Marodeo

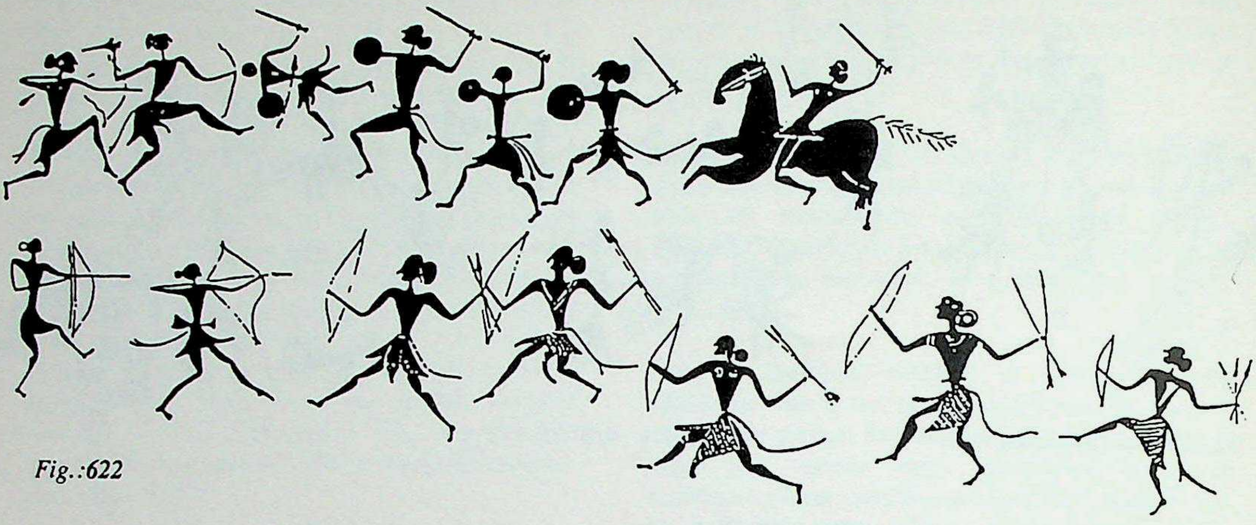


Fig.:622

Fig.:623

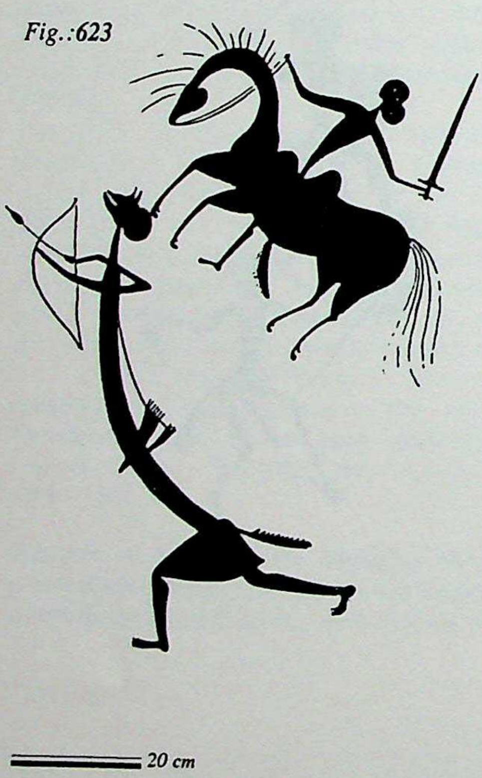


Fig.:624

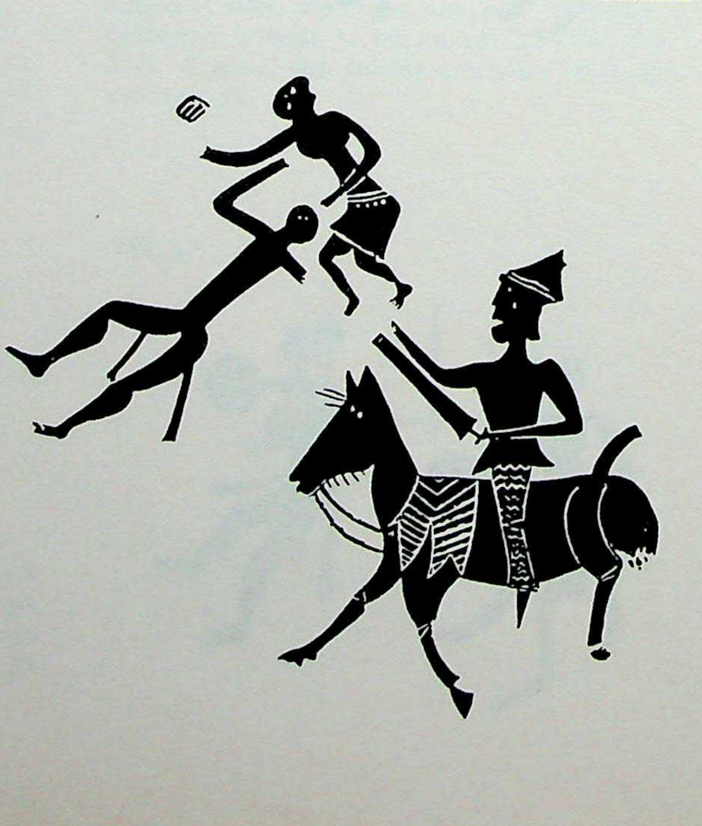


Fig.:622:Mahadeo Hills - Eeshang Shring
Fig.:623:Mahadeo Hills - Rajat Phrabat
Fig.:624:Mahadeo Hills - Agamdwar

Fig.:625:Mahadeo Hills - Mahadeo Pahar
Fig.:626:Mahadeo Hills - Mahadeo Pahar
Fig.:627:Mahadeo Hills - Mahadeo Pahar

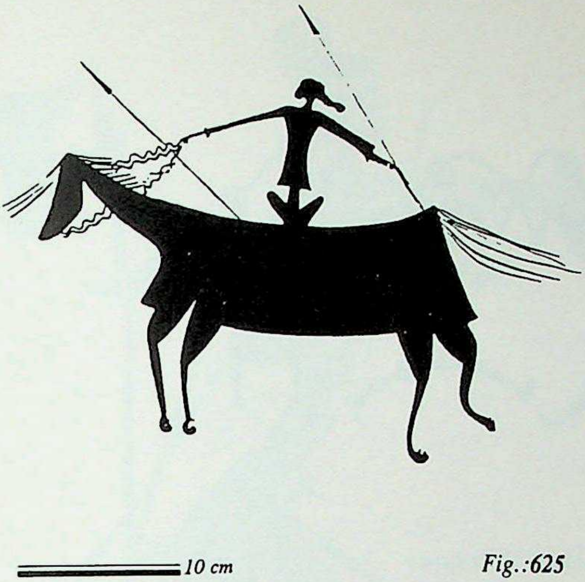


Fig.:625

Fig.:626

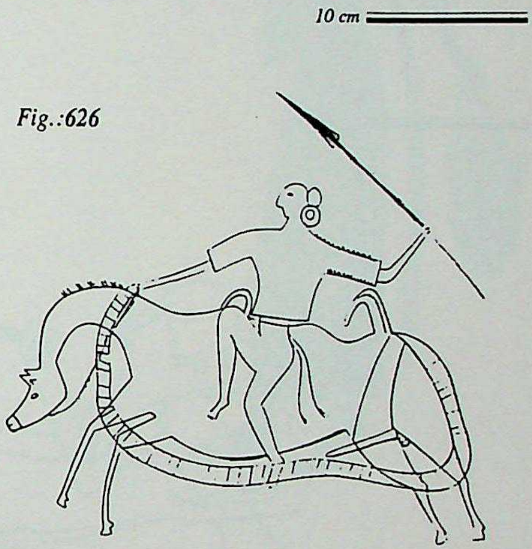
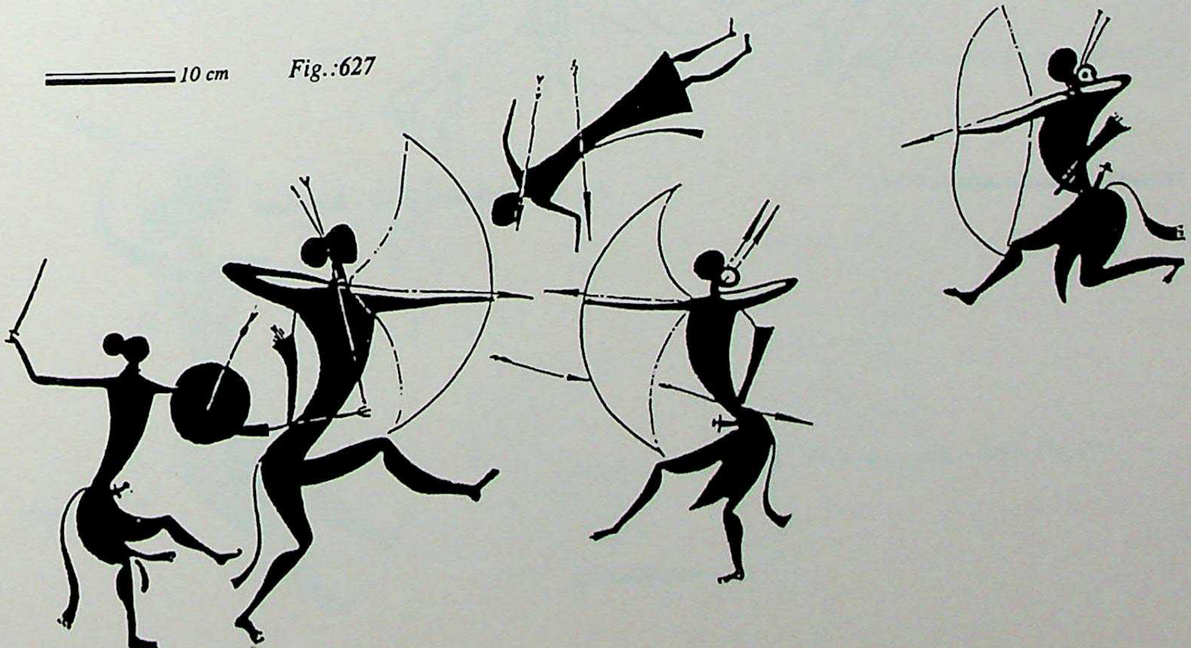


Fig.:627



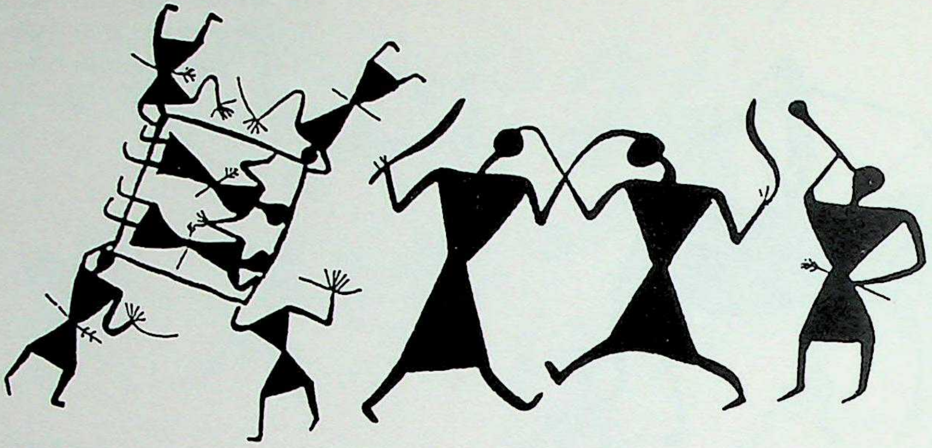


Fig.:628:Satkunda

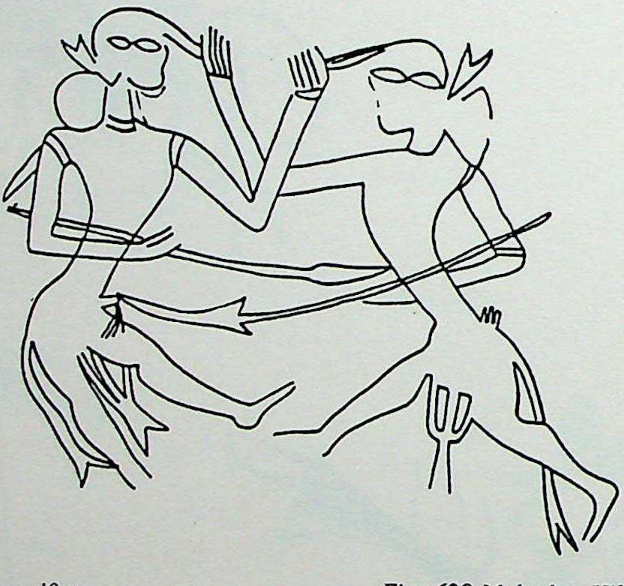


Fig.:629:Mahadeo Hills - Bori East

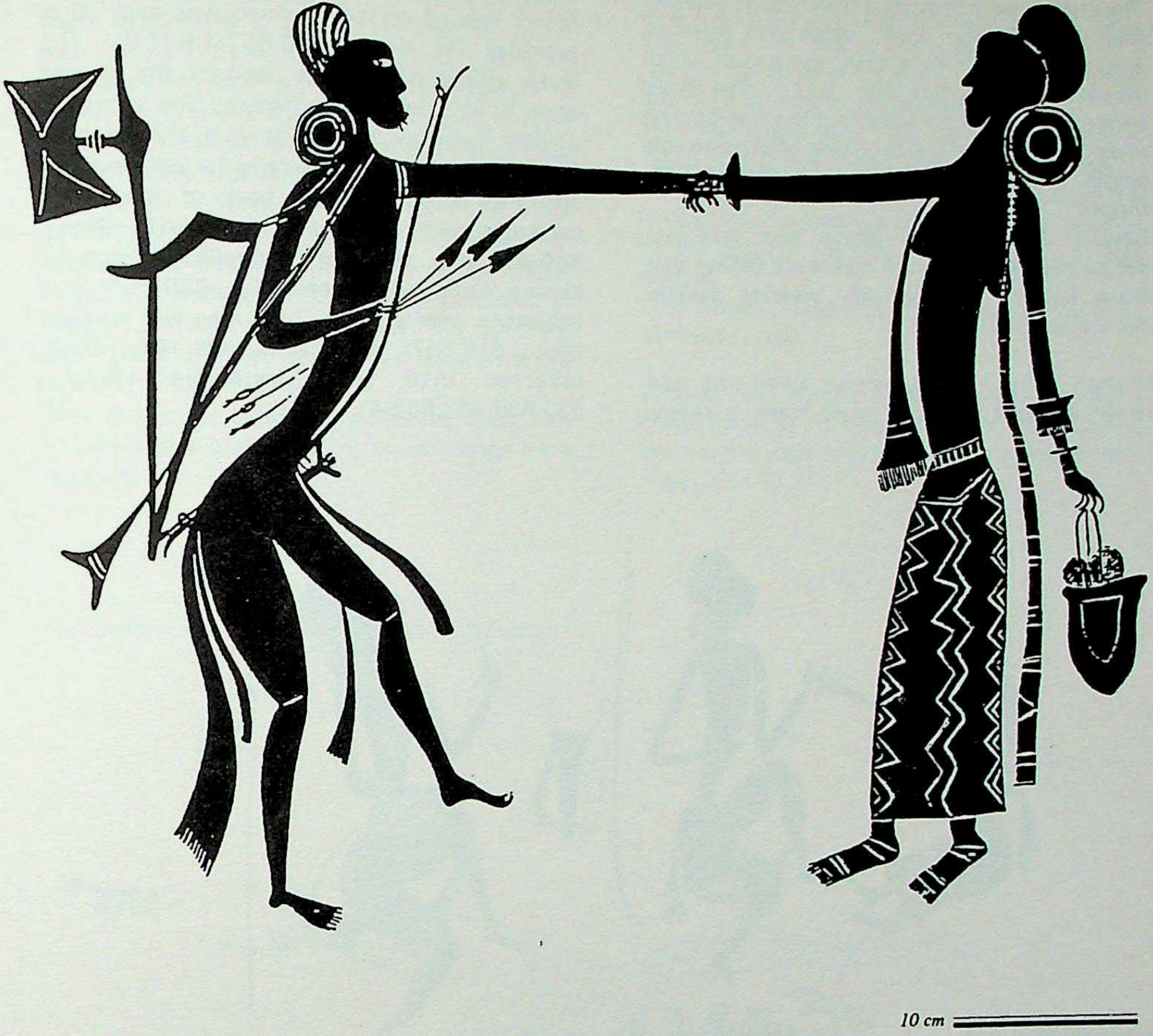


Fig.:630:Mahadeo Hills - Agamdwar

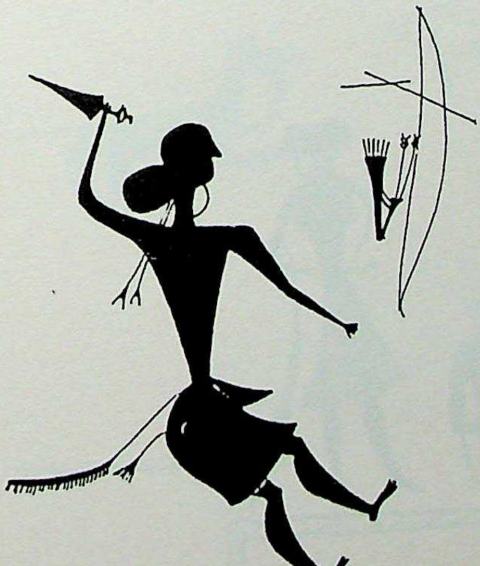


Fig.:631(from Fig.:685):Mahadeo Hills - Rajat Phrabat

The clothes were depicted similarly quite detailed. Men wore a short dhoti, which was fastened around the middle by a sash, the end of which was allowed to fall free (Figs.: 632-3). The dhotis ended high above the knee, but the free-flowing ends of the sash or the dhoti was of considerable length, and was often shown decorated with fringes.

Several warriors show dhotis with tails and dotted decorations, which makes me believe that these fighters were actually wearing panther skins (Fig.: 622).

Women wore a saree, whose loose end was rarely wrapped over the upper body. It seems that wrapping of the upper body was a more formal way of dressing, which was avoided in everyday life (Figs.: 630,632-4,637-9). The textile stripes which were used for the clothes seem to have been quite narrow. The womans' dresses invariably reached down to the ankles.

The hairdo was almost the same for both women and men: a knot at the back of the head, decorated with band and feathers(?) (Figs.: 630-43). One depiction is detailed enough to show a man's stubby beard (Fig.: 630).

Necklaces were worn by both men and women (Figs.: 615,637). They also wore large discs inserted into their earlobes (Figs.: 630,633,642,683-4).

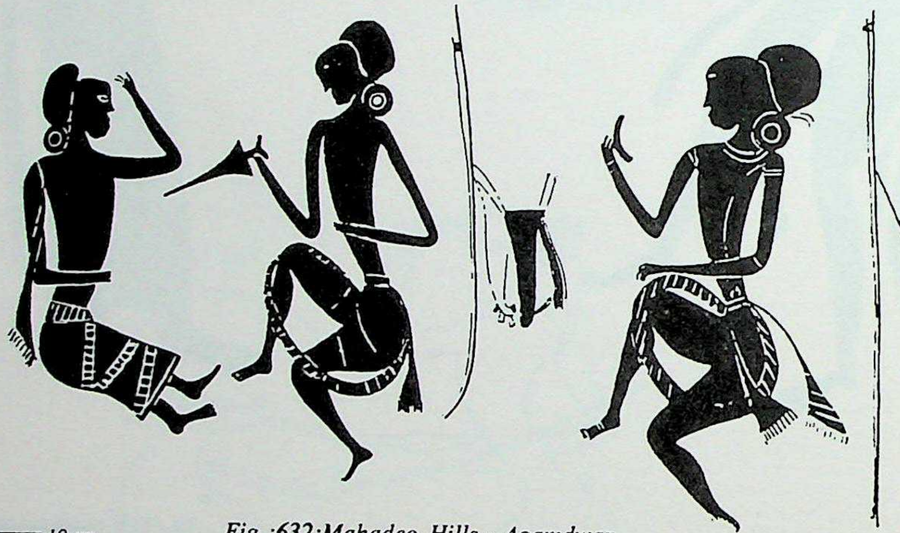
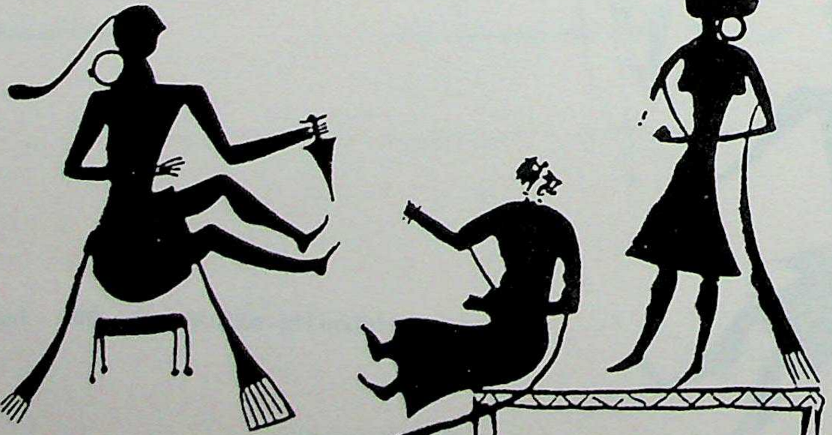


Fig.:632:Mahadeo Hills - Agamdwar

Fig.:633:Mahadeo Hills - Rajat Phrabat



There exist a few depictions of houses, which show the interior in a cut-away fashion. These pictures are extremely valuable since depictions of houses are very rare in rock-art altogether.

In the "Chieftain Shelter" --so named by Gordon after two mounted warriors in the paintings-- the most detailed depiction of a house is to be found (Fig.: 634). It shows a tent-like structure inside which two women are engaged in cooking. One woman has a child sitting in her lap (Figs.: 618,634), while another holds a large spoon. In front of her is a pot placed over the fire. Pots and pans and other utensils are hung from the pillars and from the roof.

From one of the pillars hangs a quiver filled with arrows and a bow, another quiver hangs from the roof.

Near the centre of the kitchen is a rotating hand mill. But since this is the only depiction of a rotating handmill in rock-art, this identification has to be treated as preliminary.

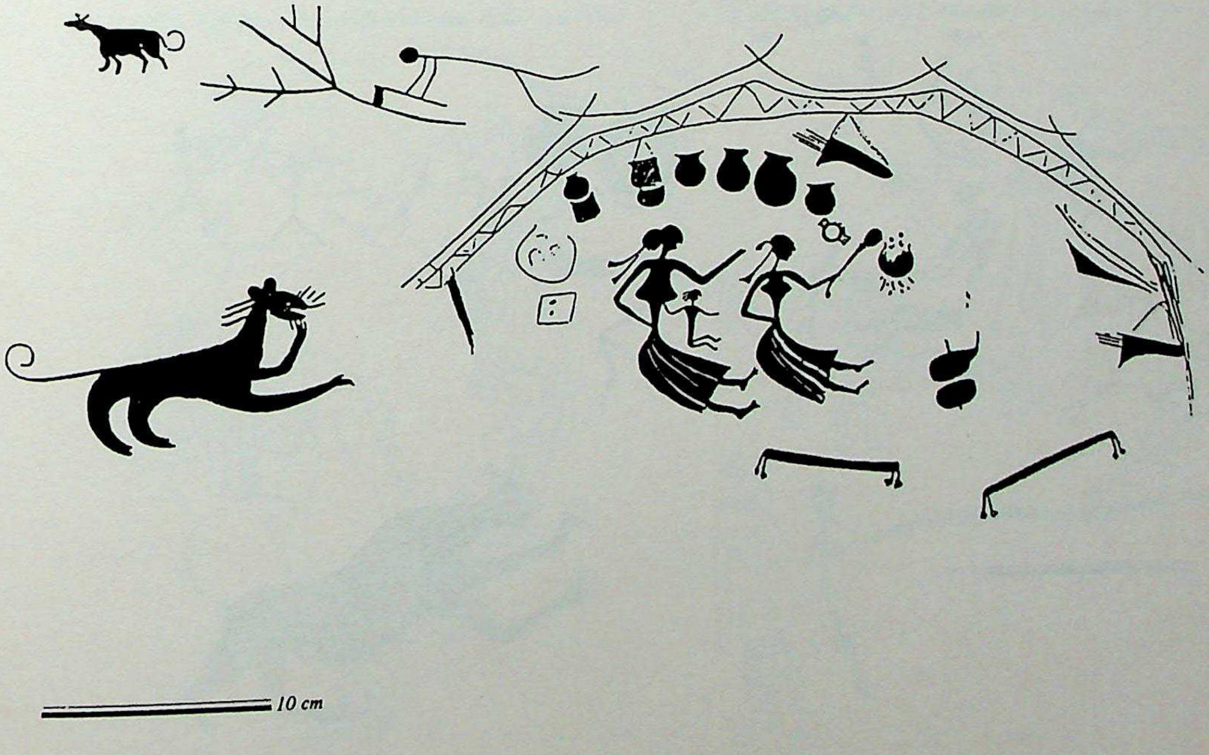
Two low seats of a type which nowadays is called "patla" are drawn beneath the women.

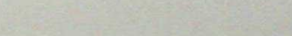
It is not clear if the figure of the man outside the house, who obviously is chopping wood, belongs to the original version, or represents a later version.

This homely scene is threatened by a large carnivorous cat.

A large cat, "threateningly" hovering around a camp-scene, is an often repeated stereotype in the historic rock paintings in the Mahadeo Hills (Figs.: 634-6).

*Fig.:**634**(from Fig.:618):Mahadeo Hills - Marodeo*





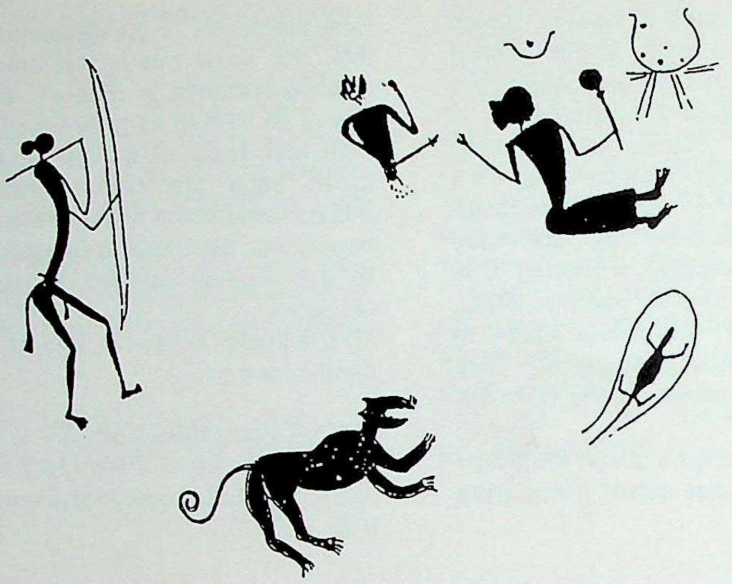
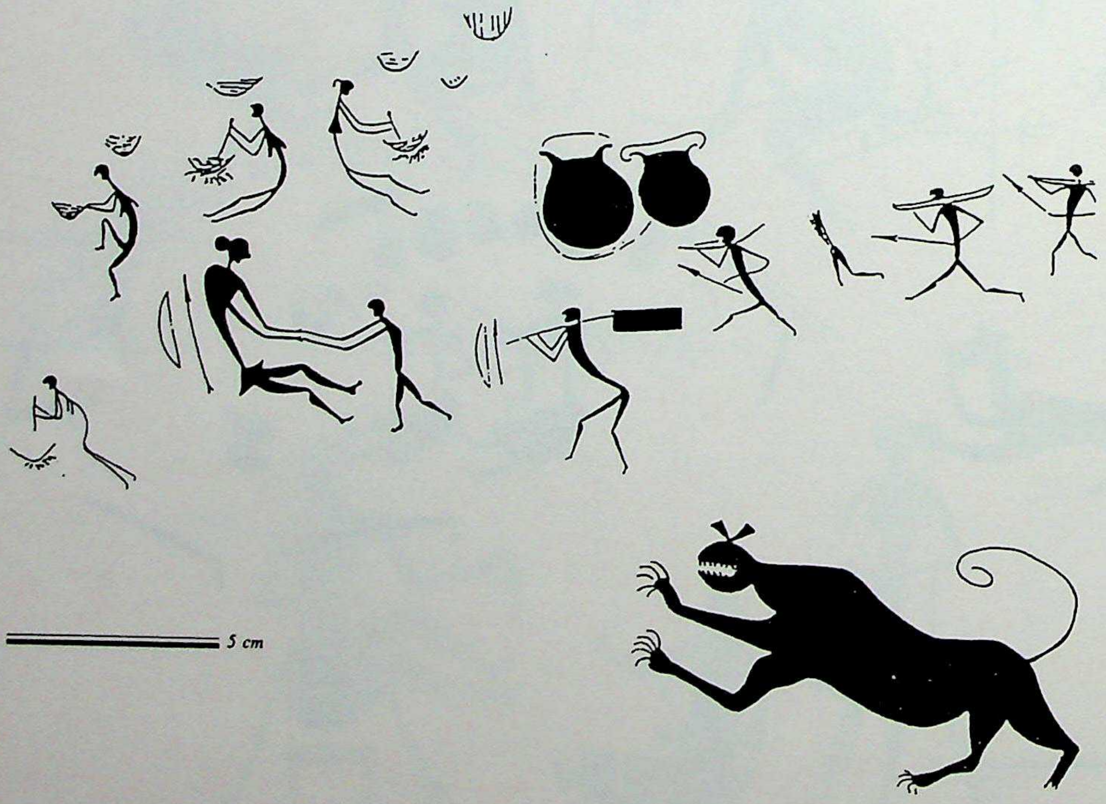


Fig.:635:Mahadeo Hills - Dorothy Deep

Fig.:636:Mahadeo Hills - Mahadeo Pahar



Another depiction of a house was found in a shelter in Bori, an important picture site west of Panchmarhi (Figs.: 637-9). Here the house is divided into two parts or rooms. In one part men and boys(?) are seen sitting on seats and string-beds. Shields, swords, bows and arrows are hanging from the walls. One large sitting man points a dagger towards himself (Fig.: 638), while his legs are massaged by a woman. In front of this part of the house stands an armed warrior with sword and shield. The other part of the house is filled with dancing men and women, some of them reclining on string-beds, jewellery scattered on the ground. Her too a woman is seen massaging(?) the head of a man (Fig.: 639). One woman is standing at the back (on top) of the house; she holds a small "hand bag", a frequently shown accessory of women (Figs.: 630,637,643,691).

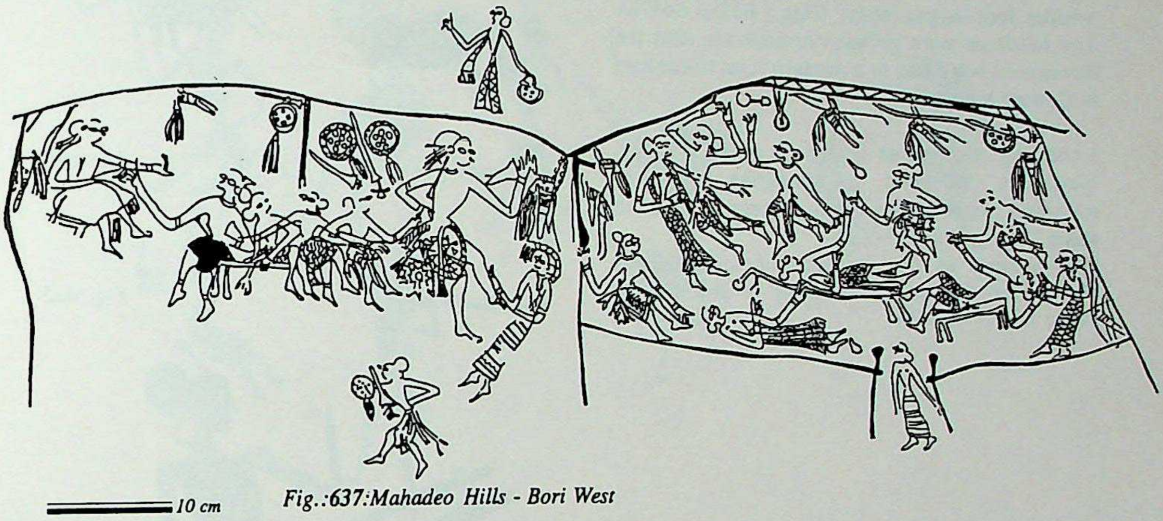


Fig.:637:Mahadeo Hills - Bori West

Fig.:638(from Fig.:637):Mahadeo Hills - Bori West

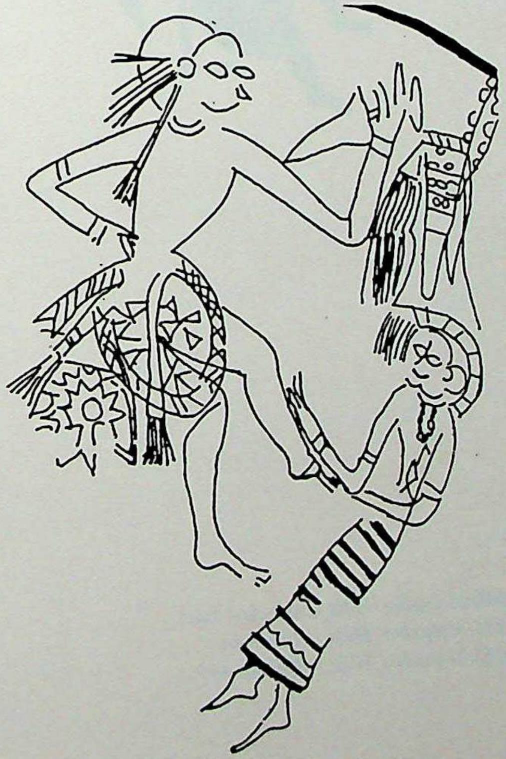
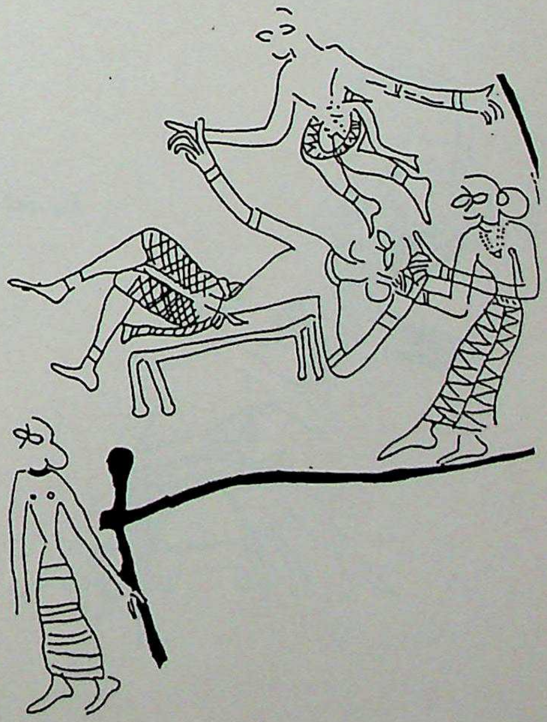


Fig.:639(from Fig.:637):Mahadeo Hills - Bori West



A further depiction of a house was found in Astachal East. Here we see a pillared building with a gabled roof (Fig.: 640). An animal is seen inside the building, a pig and a cow in front. The figure of a woman is close by.

The furniture in the pictures in these camp-scenes shows a considerable degree of material sophistication. Depicted are bedsteads with carved legs (Figs.: 633,637,674) as well as smaller four-legged seats (Figs.: 633-4,641-3). The furniture more or less corresponds with the equipment one finds in a modern rural household in Central India.

I consider the figures sitting on small seats as hierarchic elevated personalities. Heroes, swinging daggers, are often enthroned on such seats (Figs.: 633,641-2).
This reminds us of the heroes or gods in the chalcolithic chariot processions at the site of Jaora (Figs.: 428-9).

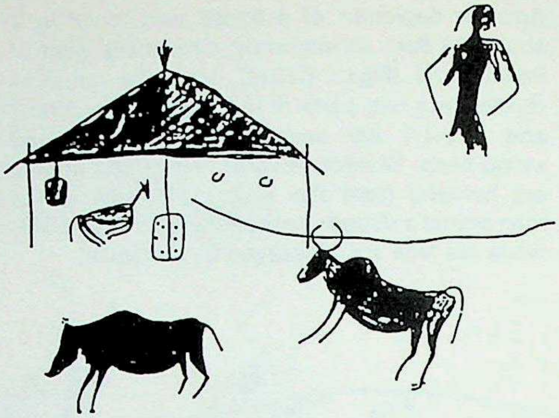
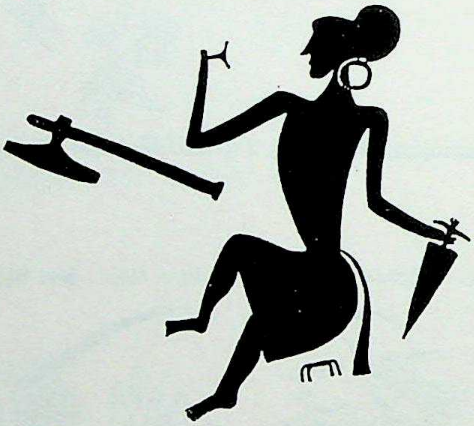


Fig.:640

Fig.:642



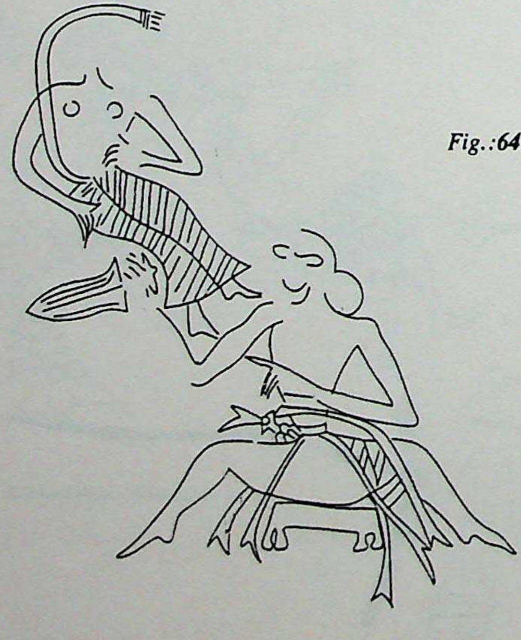


Fig.:641

Fig.:640:Mahadeo Hills - Astachal East
Fig.:641:Mahadeo Hills - Bori East
Fig.:642:Mahadeo Hills - Agamdwar

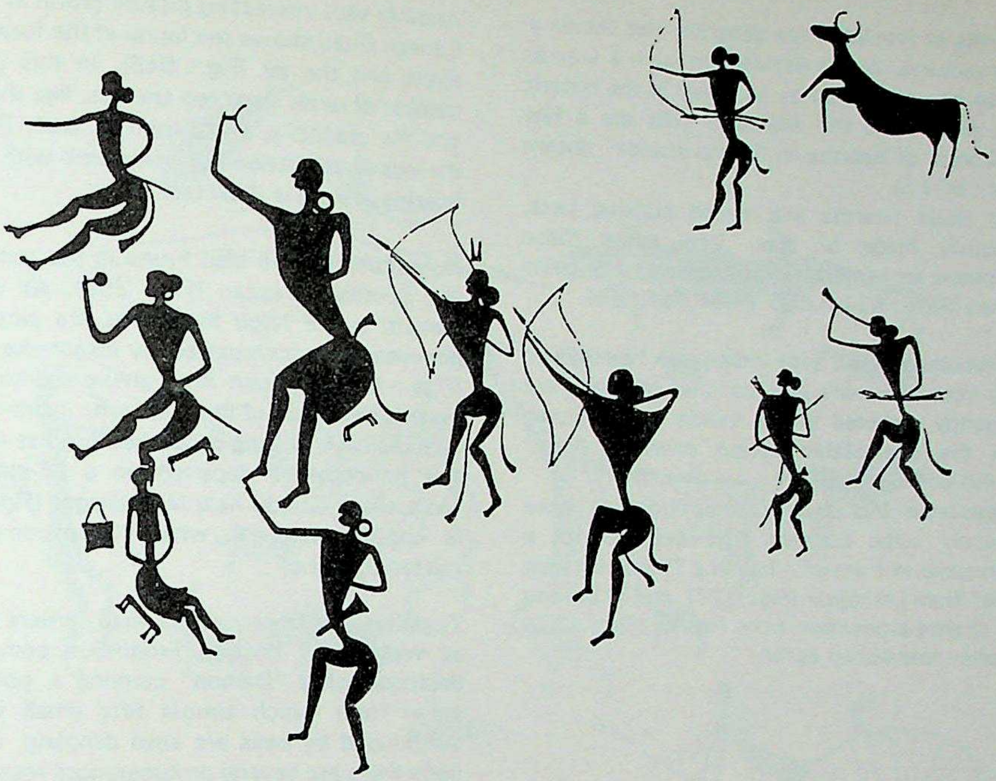


Fig.:643:Mahadeo Hills - Jambu Dweep 10 cm

Hearths or fireplaces are generally not shown in rock pictures, or are depicted in such a way as not to be understood by us. Only in the historic rock pictures in the Mahadeo Hills are a few depictions of hearths in "camp-scenes" shown (Figs.: 634-6).

Over these hearths are placed cooking pots, obviously made of clay. Very often these depictions are in close vicinity to honey collection scenes (Figs.: 634-6,650-1,661,666,668).

Honeycombs of the large Indian rock bee --which hang from rock walls and branches of trees-- are frequently depicted in the Indian rock pictures from the chalcolithic period onwards (Figs.: 644-56,659-61).

Honeycombs included in picture groups have obviously cultic content. The depiction of a honeycomb in front of a bull in a "transportation scene" from Lakhajoar (Fig.: 373), and at the end of a chariot-procession from Firengi (Fig.: 430), has been mentioned earlier.

Another very interesting picture group at the site Ganesh Ghati shows the fauna of the forests, the rivers and the air (Fig.: 645). In this group a number of rarely depicted animals, like the snake and the crocodile, are shown as well. Between the legs of an antelope a honeycomb with insects buzzing around is depicted.

Honeycombs were also found in the rock-art of the Southern Deccan (Fig.: 358). At the site Iduhatti in the Nilgir Mountains are pictures of honeycombs accompanied by insect-like figures (Figs.: 648-9). Even now these paintings are revered by people of the area, who claim that the pictures have healing properties against mumps. The honeycombs depicted on a "T-stand" at Moissailana Guddu near Vijayanagar (Fig.: 474) is another example where honeycombs are related to icons.

Together with honeycombs, load carriers appear as well (Figs.: 650-1). From Bori comes the depiction of a "Demon" carrying a porterage yoke, from which almost fifty small vessels surrounded by bees are seen dangling. On the body there are several protuberances resembling honeycombs.

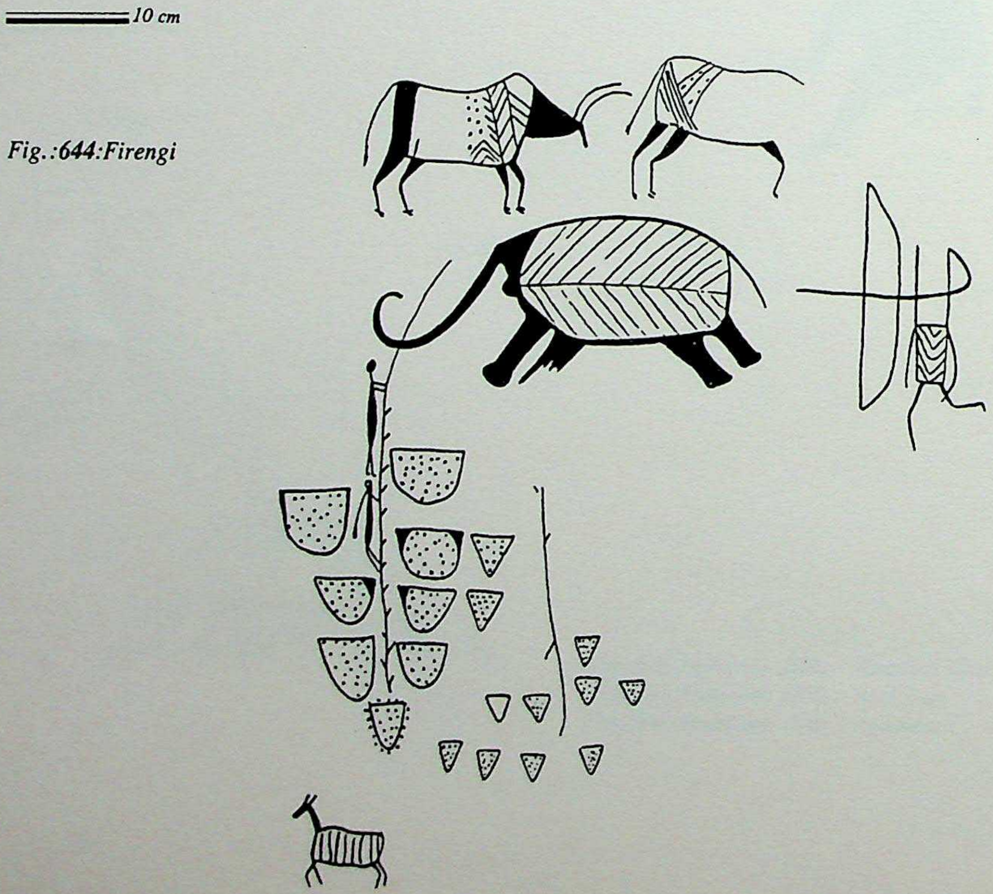


Fig.:644:Firengi

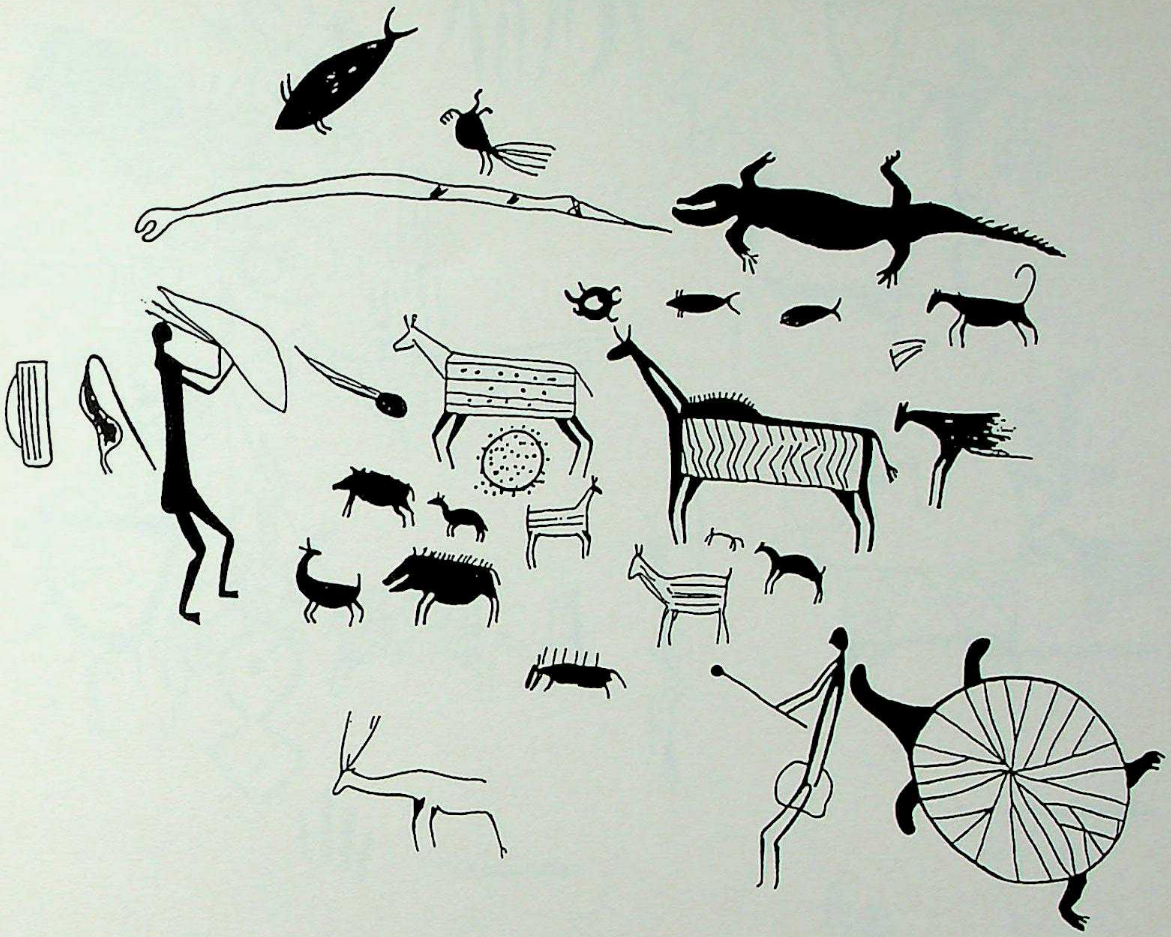
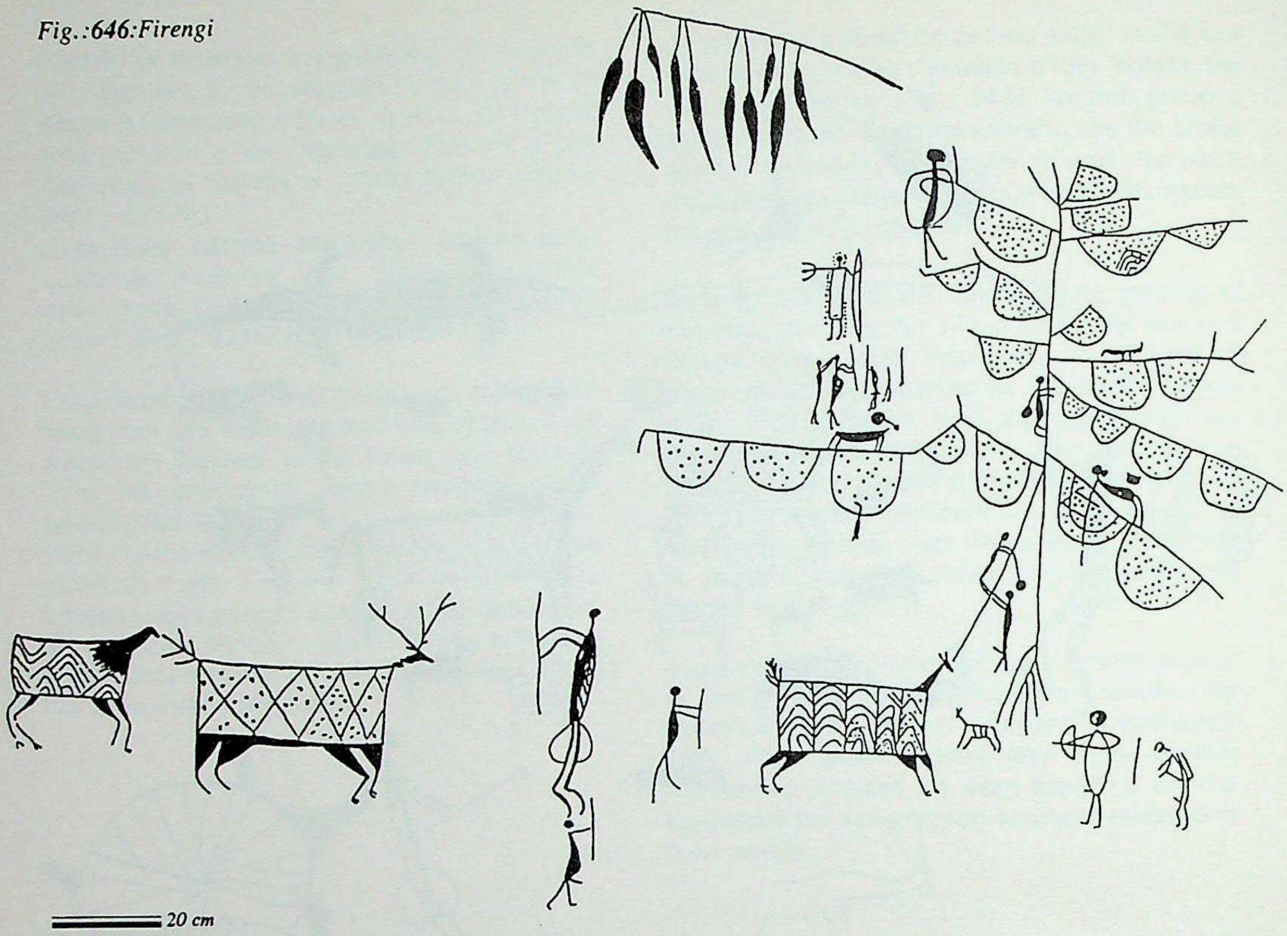


*Fig.:***645***:Ganesh Ghati*

Fig.:646:Firengi



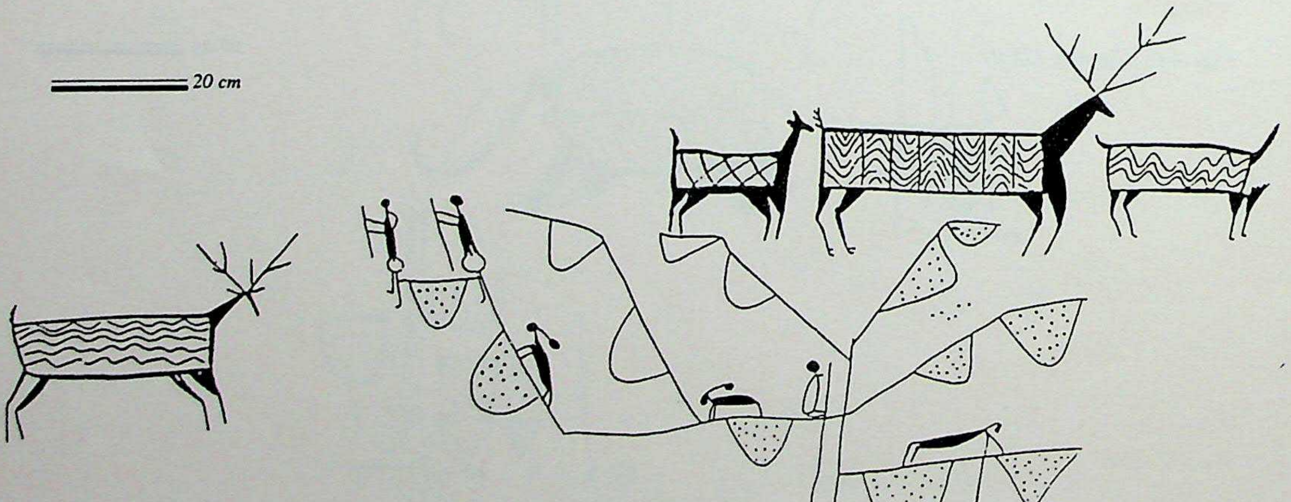


Fig.:647:Firengi

Fig.:648

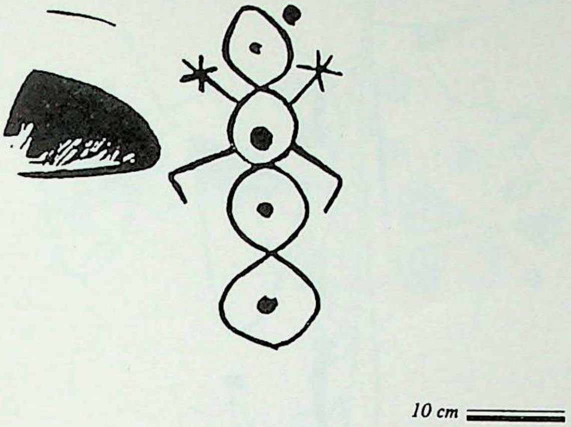


Fig.:650

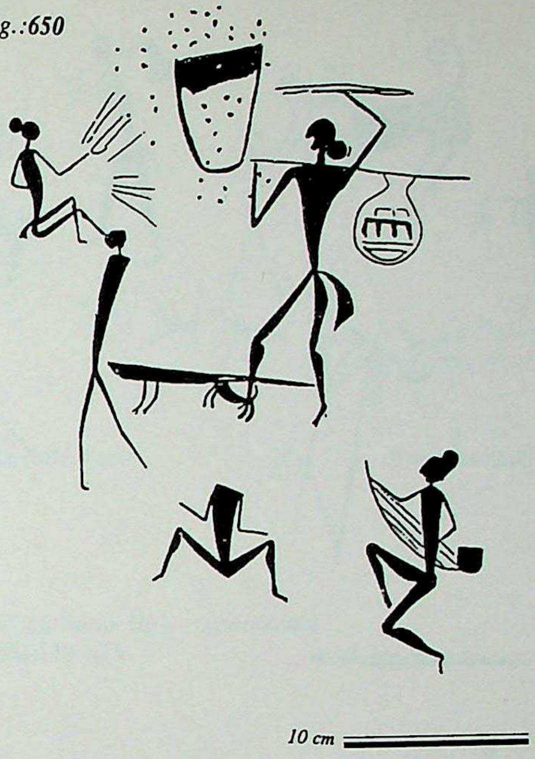
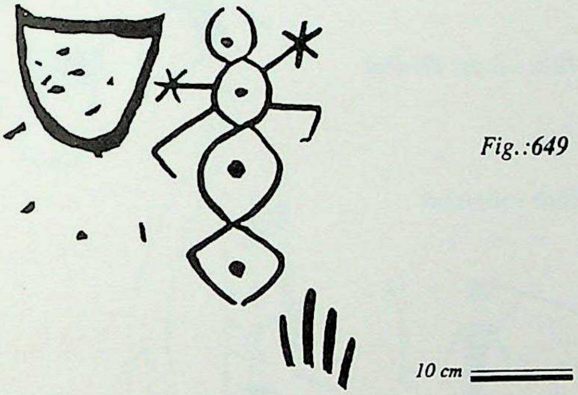


Fig.:649



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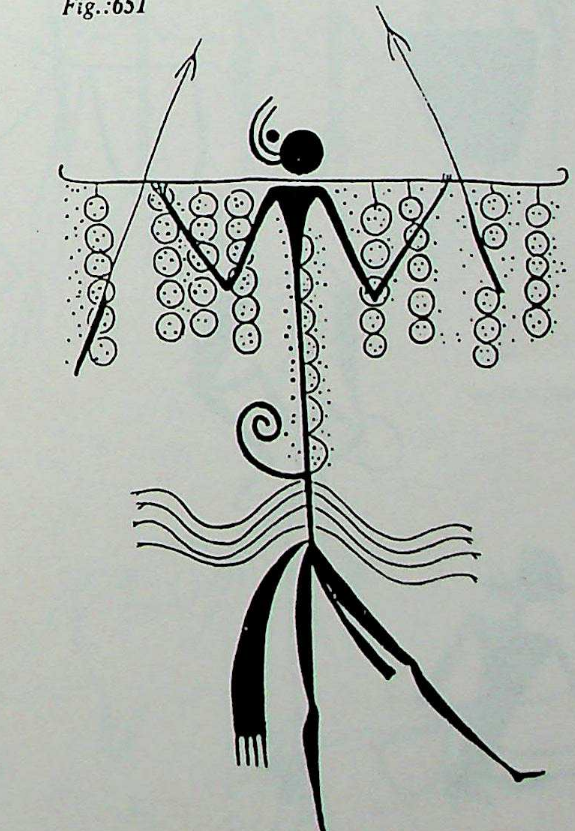


*Fig.:**648**:Iduhatti*
*Fig.:**649**:Iduhatti*
*Fig.:**650**:Mahadeo Hills - Kites Crag*
*Fig.:**651**:Mahadeo Hills - Bori East*

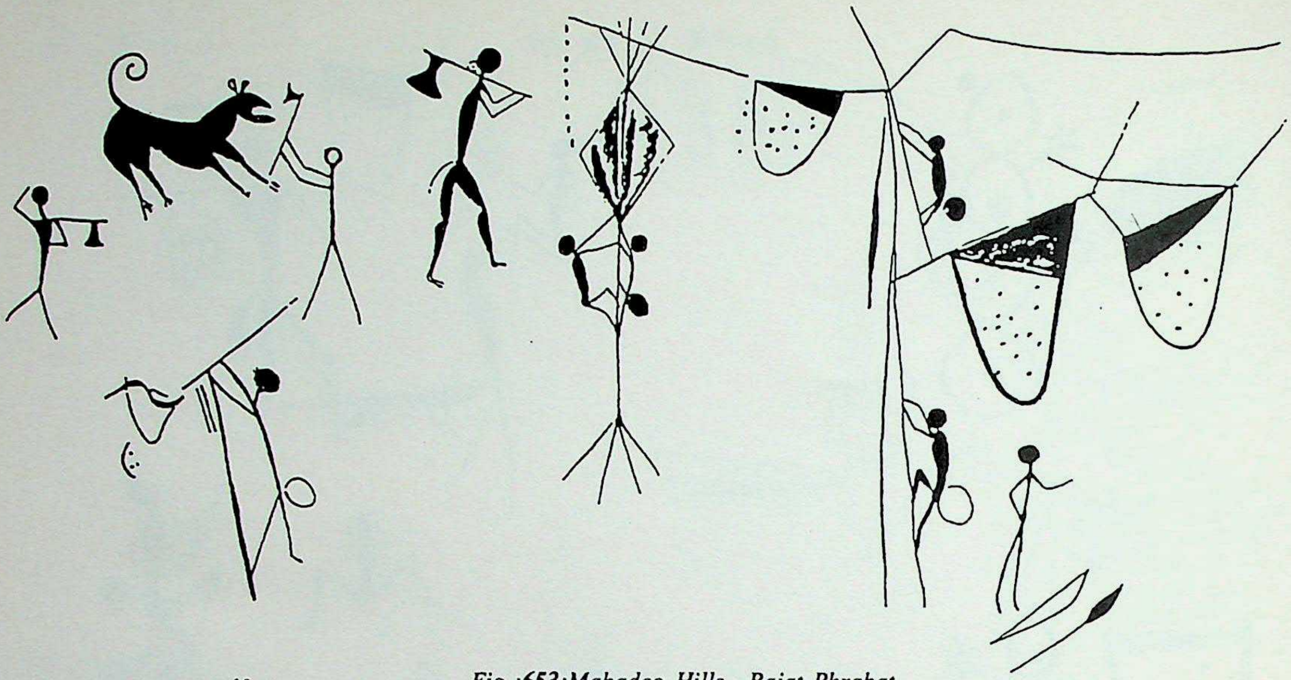
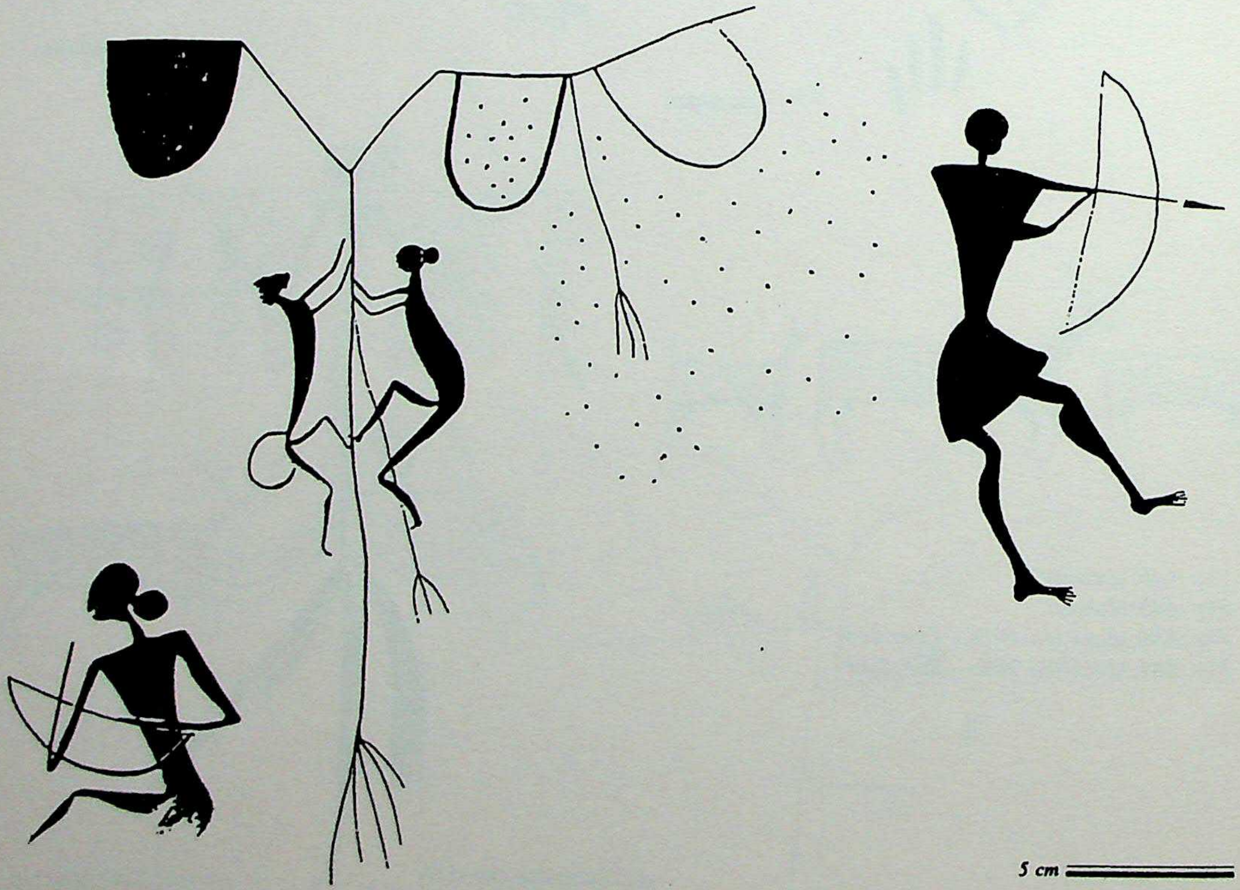


Fig.:653:Mahadeo Hills - Rajat Phrabat

Fig.:652:Mahadeo Hills - Astachal



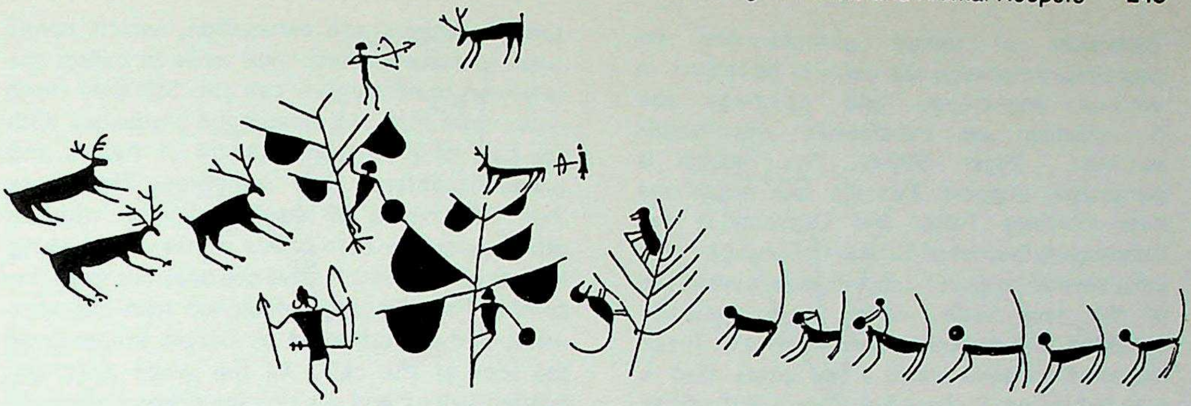


Fig.:654:Putli Karar

Fig.:655:Mahadeo Hills - Astachachal

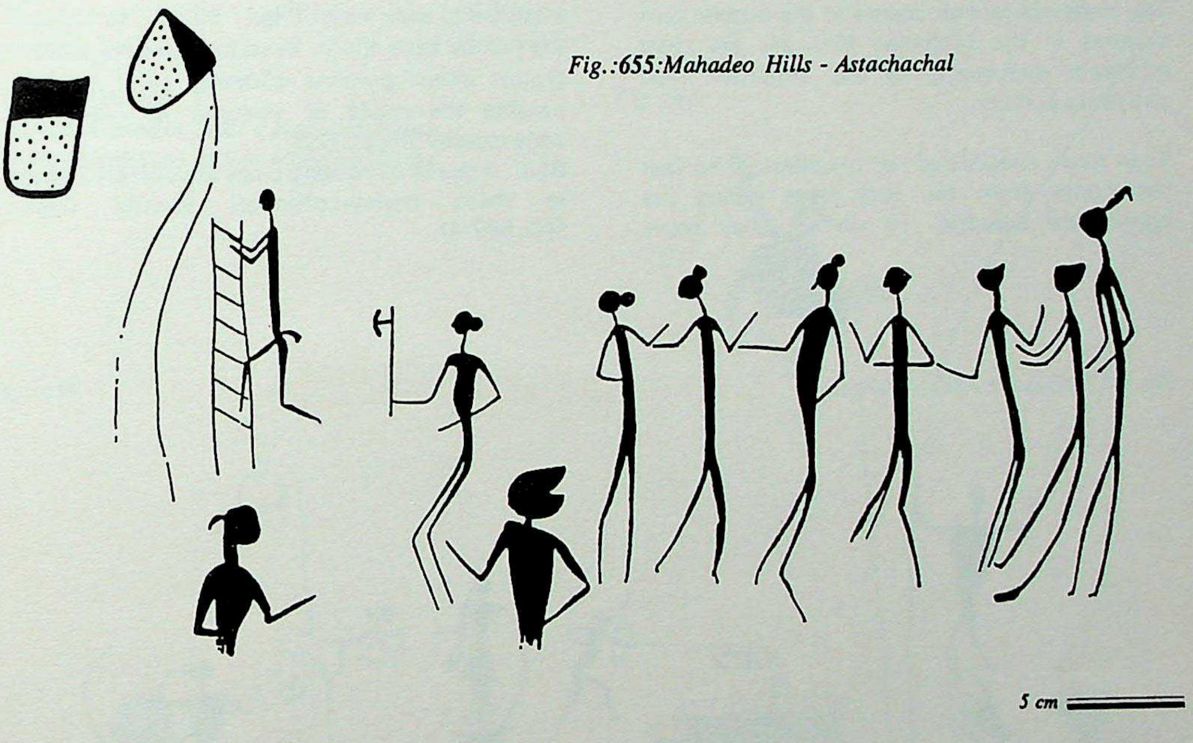
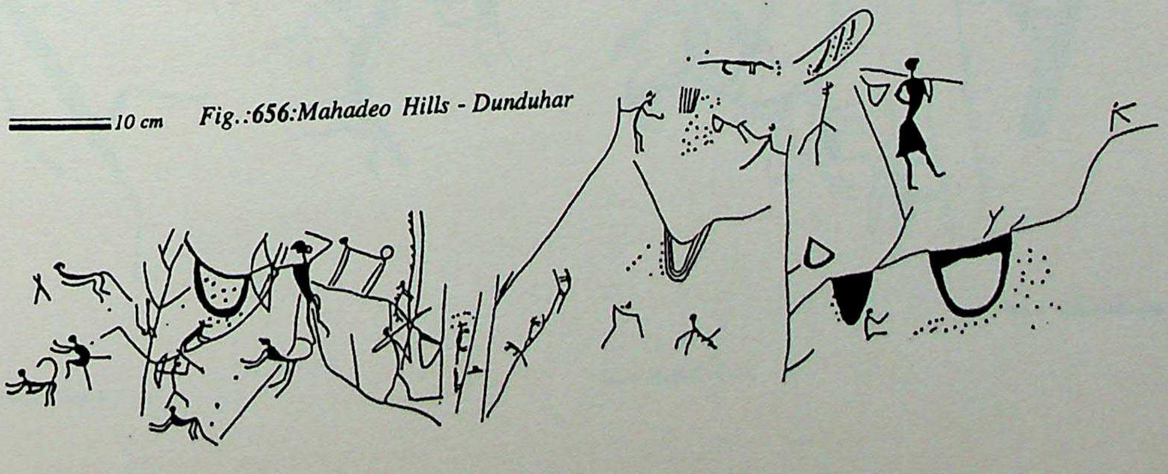


Fig.:656:Mahadeo Hills - Dunduhar



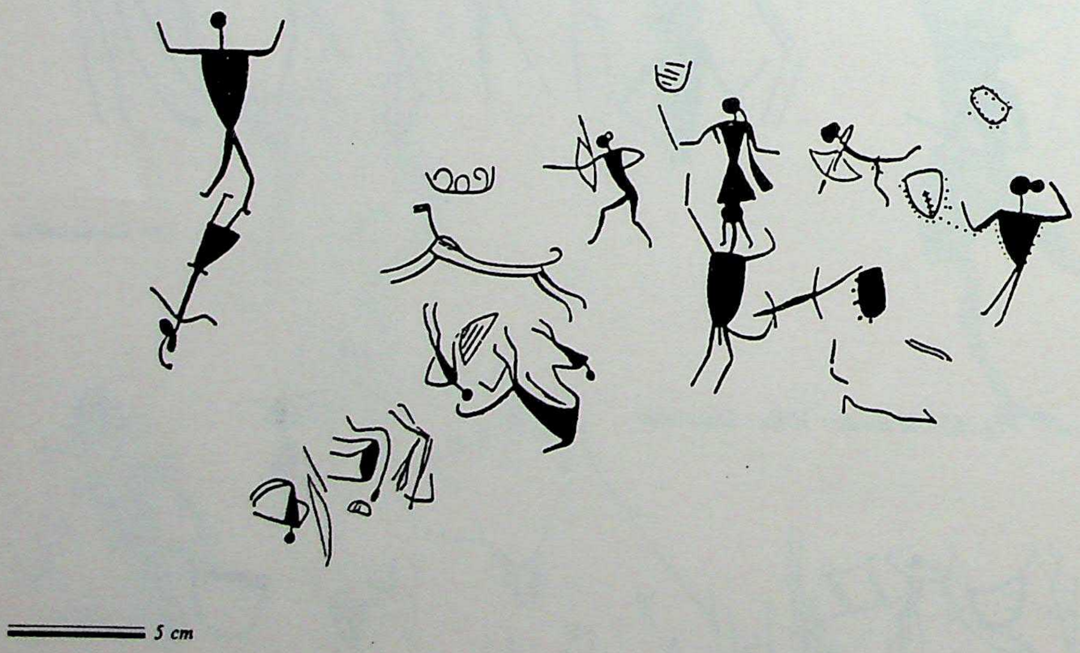
Depictions of female genitalia and the bag-shaped honeycombs seem to be related. In several engravings and paintings the honeycombs are transformed into female pudenda (Figs.: 657-8). This relation is particularly suggestive in the rock engravings near Chhenga Pahar and Osakhoti in the Sundargarh District of Orissa. In Chhenga Pahar exist several holes in a conglomerate-layer in one of the rock walls, which were artificially extended, and pudenda engraved over it. These engraved pudenda are in a few cases filled in with red colour. In these holes nests of the small Indian rock bees are invariably found. These beehives are obviously still "harvested" with the help of wooden spatulas. It is not clear from which period these engravings originate.

The honey-collection scenes in the historic rock pictures in the Mahadeo Hills are the most elaborate documents of this important food gathering activity.

Even today specialized honey-collectors harvest the honey from the rock bees during the appropriate seasons. To do so, they brave terrible dangers and exhaustion, which hardly seem to make it worth their while to collect the few litres of honey they can get. Still they climb down from high and dangerous precipices with the help of rope ladders made of twines and bamboo-splinters. They sometimes face more than fifty metres of sheer rock wall, with no other protection than braids of heavily smoking leafy branches which drive the bees out from the combs. The combs get detached from the rock walls, and are collected by people standing at the foot of the cliff. All the while bees are buzzing around and stinging the honey collectors hundreds of times.

The rock paintings show clearly how a honeycomb gets detached by a bent stick (Fig.: 659), or men climbing trees with containers attached to their waist (Figs.: 652-4), to harvest the combs from there. Several extensive picture groups show persons climbing over ladders, passing the nests of vultures to reach the honeycombs (Figs.: 655, 660). Pictures of nesting birds are closely related to these honey-collection scenes (Figs.: 660,662-4).

Fig.:657:Mahadeo Hills - Marodeo



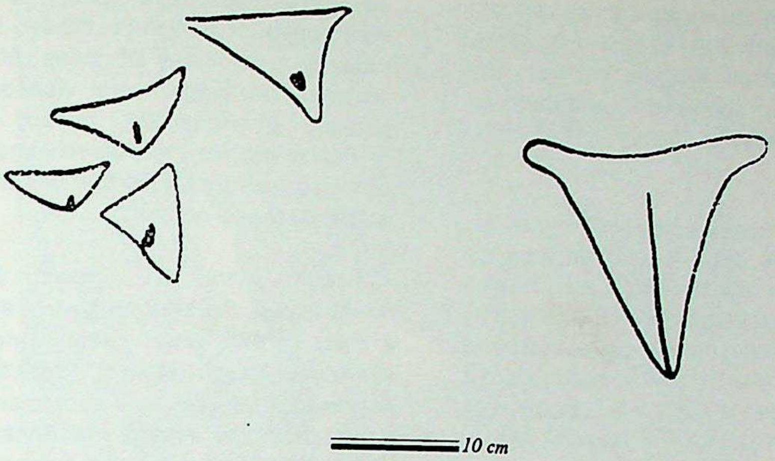


Fig.:658

Fig.:658:Osakothi
Fig.:659:Mahadeo Hills - Mahadeo Pahar
Fig.:660:Mahadeo Hills - Mahadeo Pahar

Fig.:660

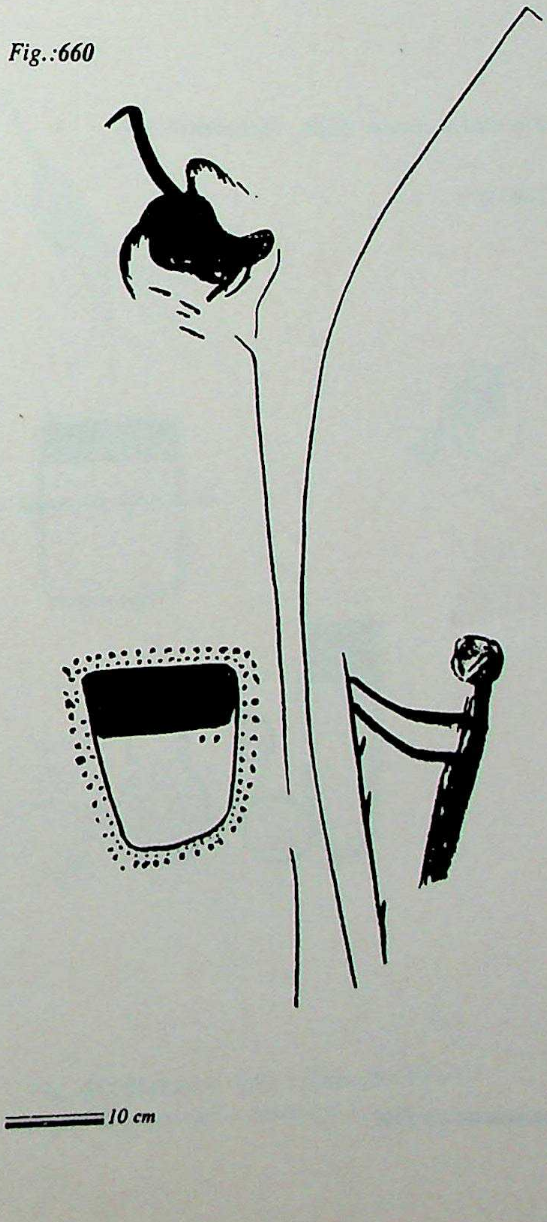
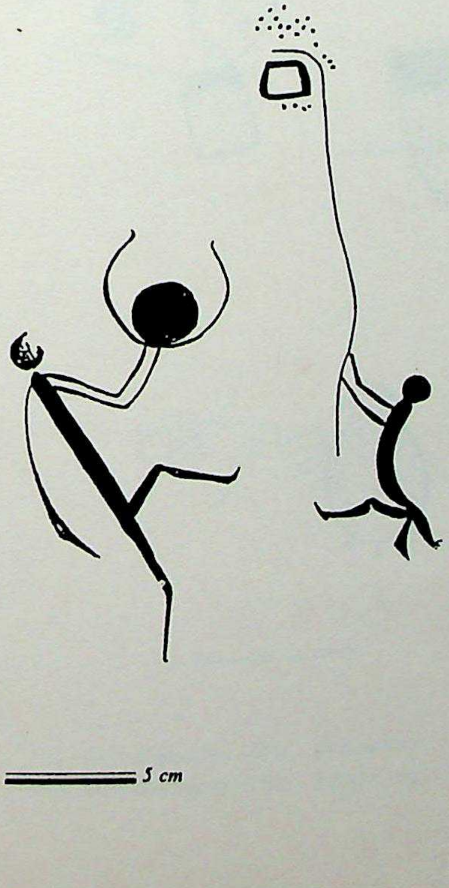


Fig.:659



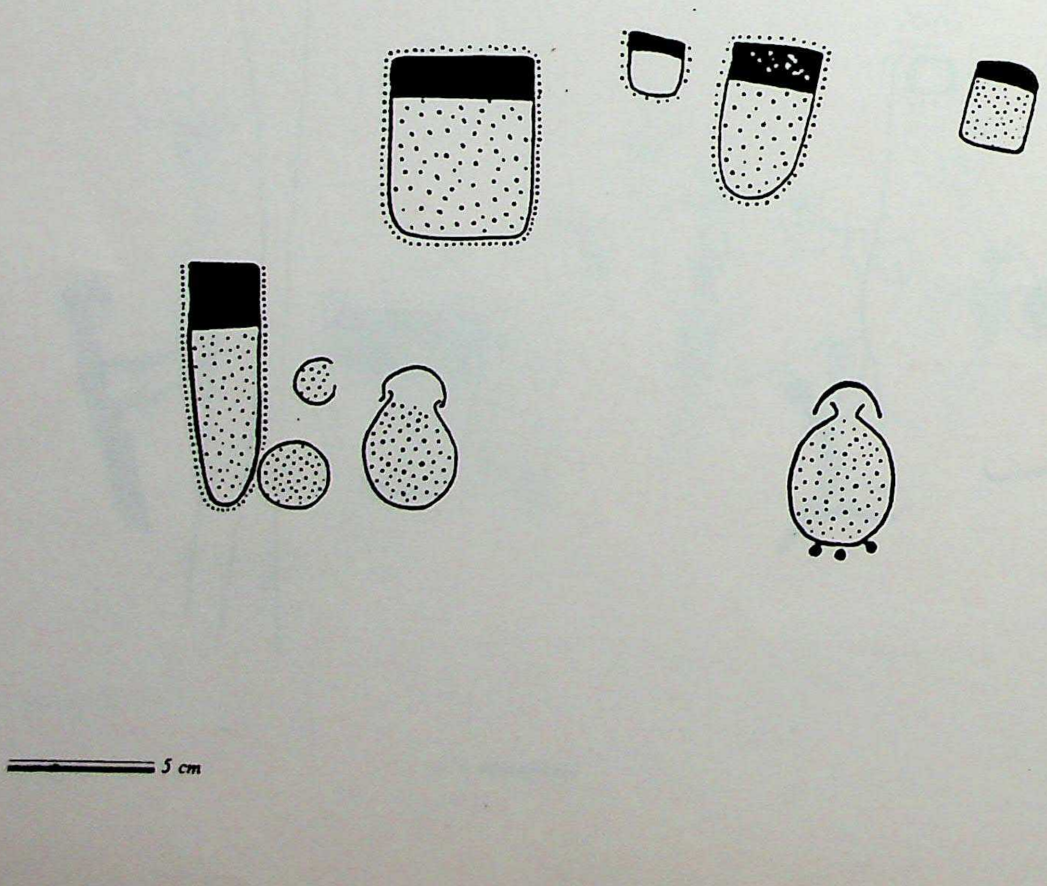
These scenes do not appear as if they were only a narration of the profane act of collecting honey, but suggest a closer relation between the mythology of rising of the shaman and the bees, which is also manifest in many Central Indian tribal myths.

In close vicinity to honey collection scenes are depictions of pottery (Fig.: 661). The pots are shown in X-ray style, the content is indicated by dots. Several of the pots are covered by lids. The closeness between honeycombs, storage jars and cooking scenes in the picture groups around Mahadeo Pahar (Figs.: 635-6) do indicate that honey was stored in jars and processed further over fire.

As already mentioned, honey collection scenes are frequent only in the Mahadeo Hills. It is quite probable that many of these difficult to reach shelters and crags were visited only for the purpose of collecting honey. Since honey collection is almost exclusively shown in pictures of the agriculturists, we can presume that honey was exchanged or sold.

Although there are many depictions of honeycombs, the swarming bees are indicated as a mass of dots only. There is no depiction of individual bees, indeed insects are rarely portrayed at all. The few exceptions are the two figures from the already mentioned site Iduhatti (Figs.: 648-9) and several figures of moths or locusts from a site near Anegondi (Figs.: 665).

Fig.:661:Mahadeo Hills - Mahadeo Pahar



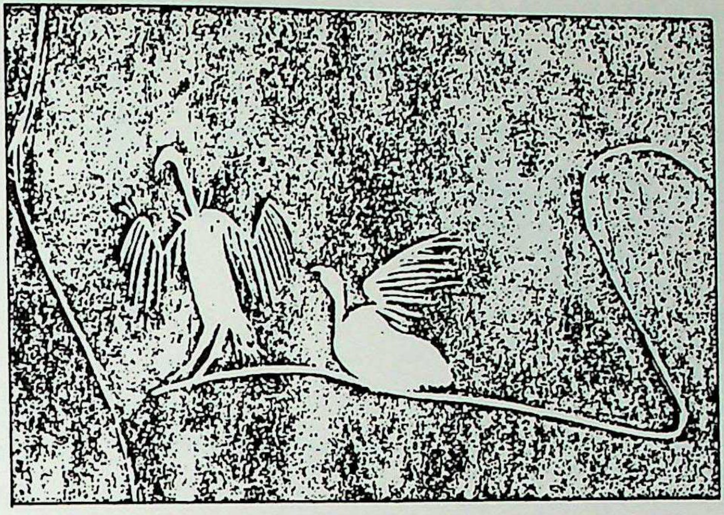


Fig.:662

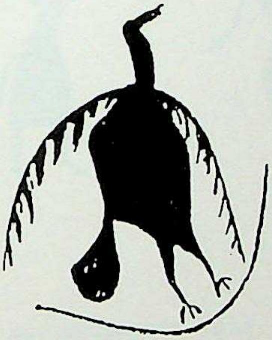


Fig.:664

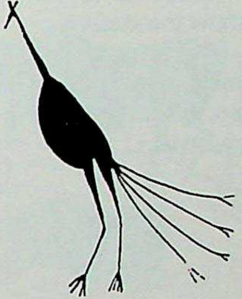


Fig.:663

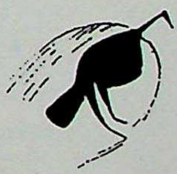


Fig.:665

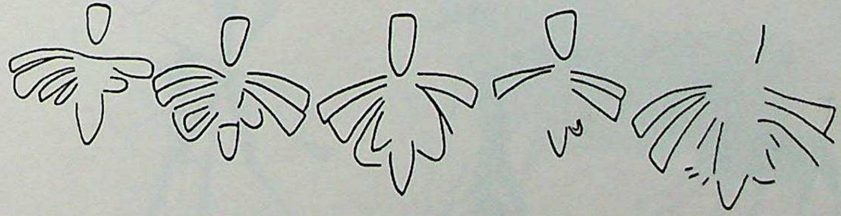


Fig.:662:Mahadeo Hills - Dunduhar
Fig.:663:Mahadeo Hills - Kites Crag

Fig.:664:Mahadeo Hills - Mahadeo Pahar
Fig.:665:Anegondi - Timmaye Gunte

The domesticated animals in the paintings of the Mahadeo Hills comprise dogs (Figs.:618,666,682), cattle (Figs.: 640,643, 667-70,682,688,690), pigs (Figs.: 640) and goats (Figs.: 615). Cattle are shown as draught animals in the only depiction of a cart in the painting of the Mahadeo Hills (Fig.: 669). It is not always clear, if a depicted animal is to be understood as domesticated or wild. At least in the depiction of cattle it is sometimes possible to understand the status of the animals on account of their relation towards the surrounding human figures (Fig.: 670), or on account of bells or other decorations hung around their necks.

Hunting is shown but rarely in the historic rock pictures of the Mahadeo Hills. And several of these "hunting groups" show bulls, whose bodily features correspond to the shape of domesticated animals (Fig.: 670).
Individual cattle or herds of cattle are in several picture groups thematically related to skirmishes of two groups of fighters. It seems to me probable that these pictures show the stealing of cattle and that they relate to the simmering antagonism between the farmers of the valleys and the forest-based population, who might have preyed on the cattle of the lowlanders.

Fig.:666:Mahadeo Hills - Astachal East
Fig.:667:Mahadeo Hills - Mahadeo Pahar

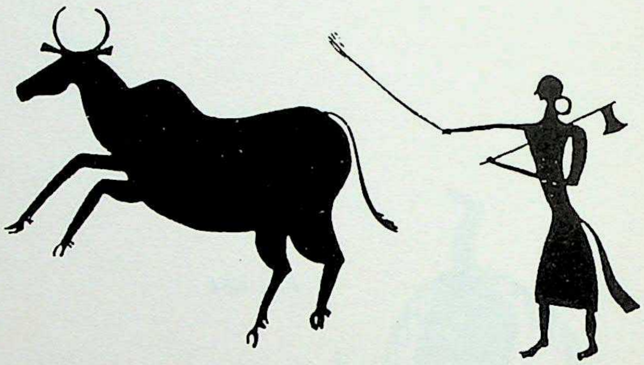


Fig.:667

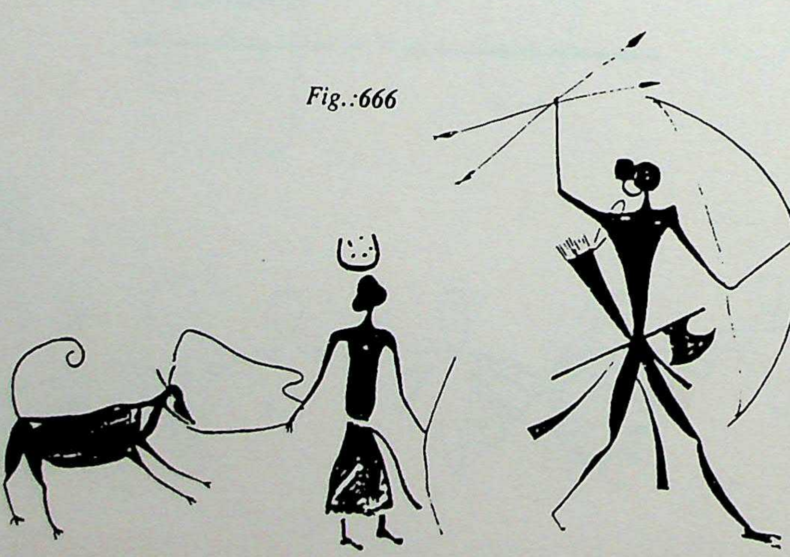


Fig.:666

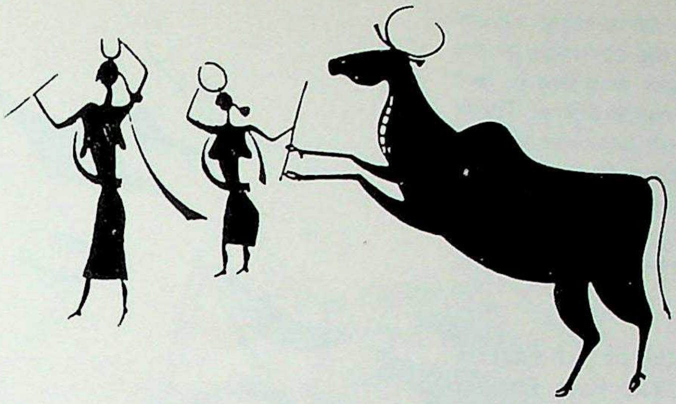


Fig.:668:Mahadeo Hills - Mahadeo Pahar

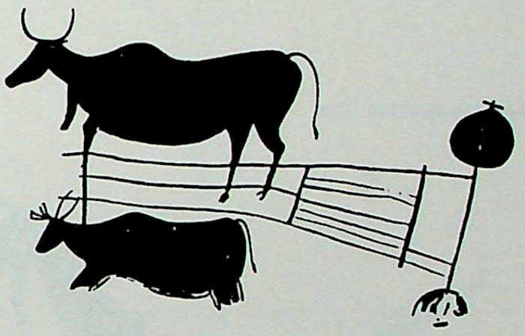


Fig.:669:Mahadeo Hills - Jalawatrun

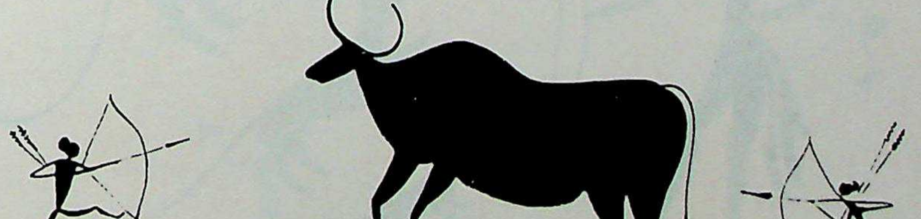


Fig.:670:Mahadeo Hills - Marodeo West

Large hunting expeditions, comprising several persons, are not known in the paintings of the Mahadeo Hills. In most cases only one or two hunters take their stand against an animal. These hunters are mostly armed with bow and arrows, but also with swords and shield. Several times a dog seems to be the hunters' companion. One rather outstanding hunting scene shows a man armed with a bow, standing before five leopards (Fig.: 671).

Catching fish with the help of fish-traps is depicted in two paintings from Rajat Phrabat (Figs.: 672-3). Depictions of fish are surprisingly rare in the historic rock pictures of the Mahadeo Hills. This is the more remarkable, since fish are shown quite frequently in the mesolithic paintings of that region (Figs.: 50,179).

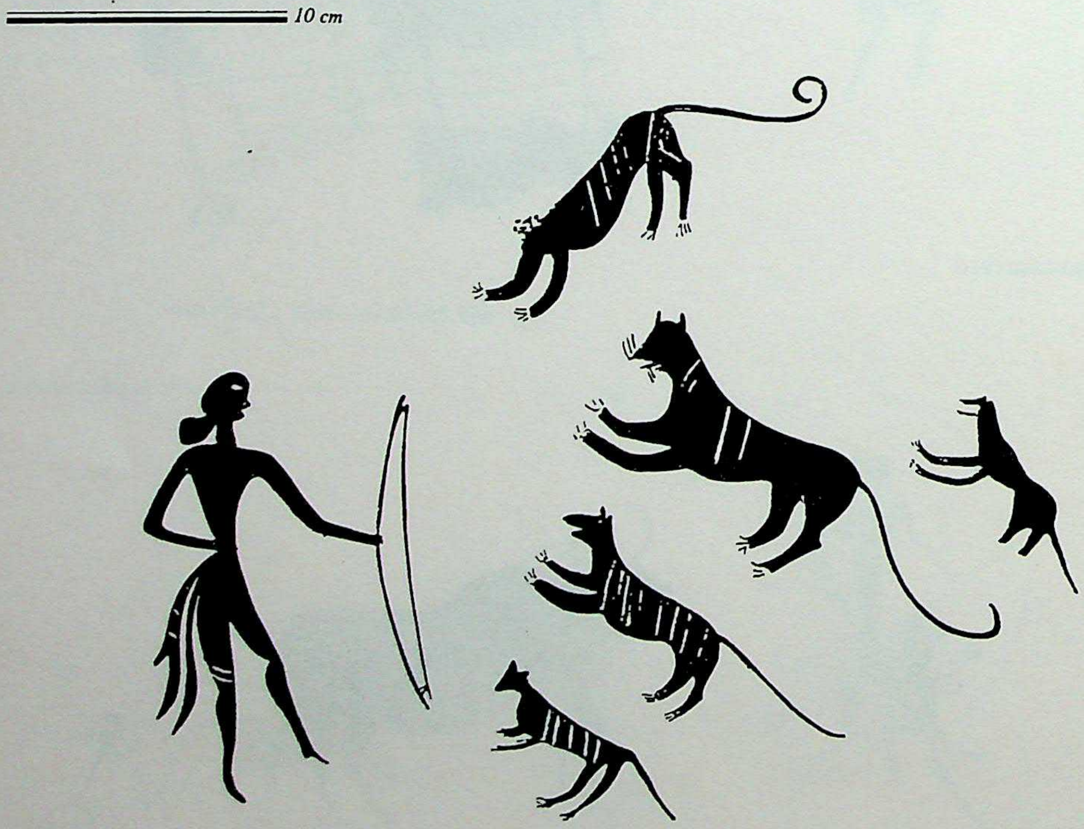


Fig.:671:Mahadeo Hills - Marodeo West

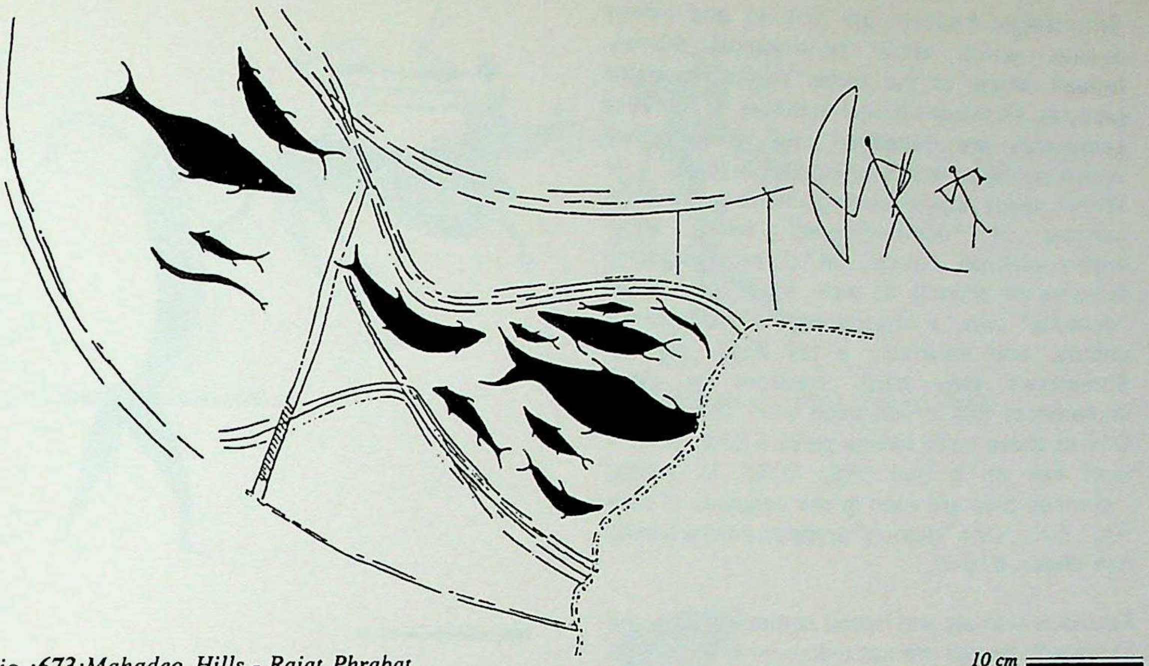


Fig.:673:Mahadeo Hills - Rajat Phrabat

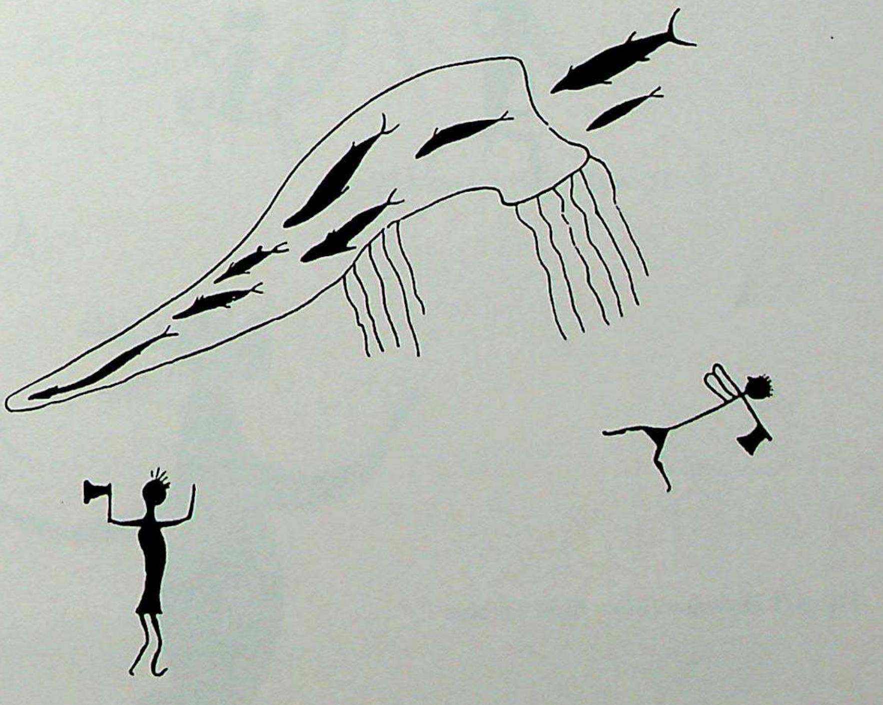


Fig.:672:Mahadeo Hills - Rajat Phrabat

Surprisingly frequent are pictures and picture scenes which show mythological themes. Indeed, many of the earlier mentioned scene pictures showing rational activities in narrative sequences are imbedded into wider scenes which might be totally unintelligible to us.
Within these scene pictures there are a large number of "demon-figures" which show anthropomorph beings, at times possessing features of animals as well. Most often these "demons" wear a shaggy coat of hair, animal snouts, and invariably a tail (Figs.: 647-7). Sometimes they carry weapons or other implements like a porterage yoke (Fig.: 651). One of these hairy beings plays a flute, while a man lies on a bed (Fig.: 674). In several instances they are seen in the company of men (Fig.: 675). One "demon" drags an animal behind him (Figs.: 676-7).

Fabulous animals and hybrid anthropomorph and zoomorph beings are not unknown in mesolithic and chalcolithic pictures, but it is only in the historic paintings in the Mahadeo Hills, where these beings seem to act like humans.

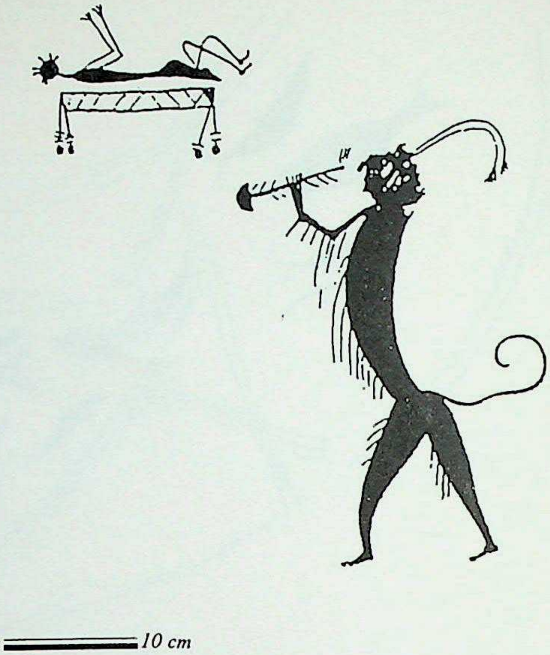


Fig.:674:Mahadeo Hills - Upper Dorothy Deep

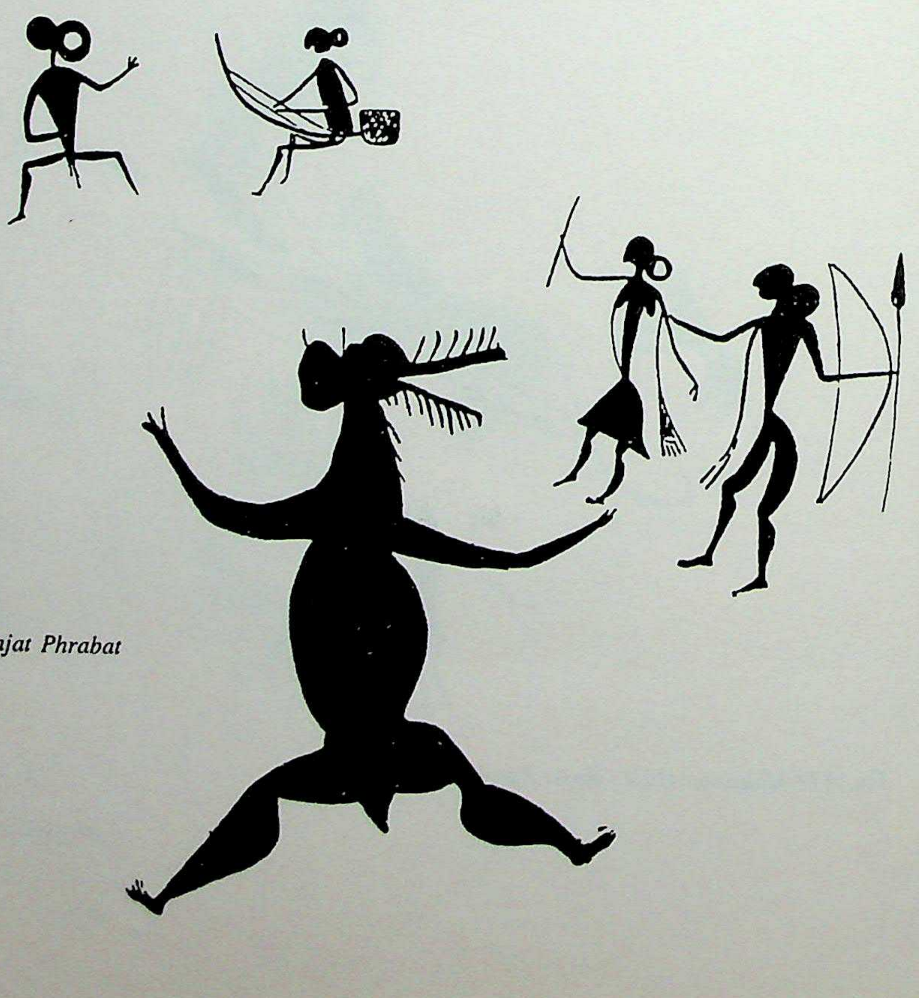


Fig.:675:Mahadeo Hills - Rajat Phrabat

10 cm

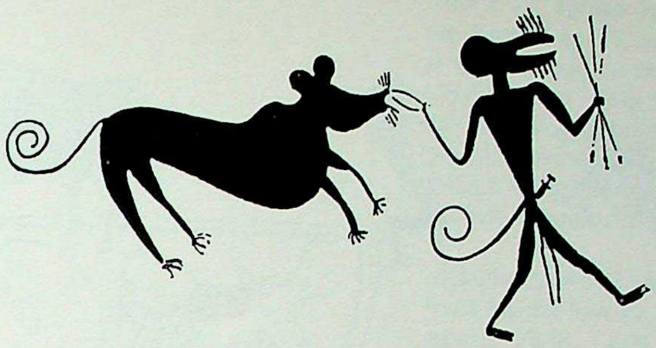


Fig.:676:Mahadeo Hills - Doroty Deep

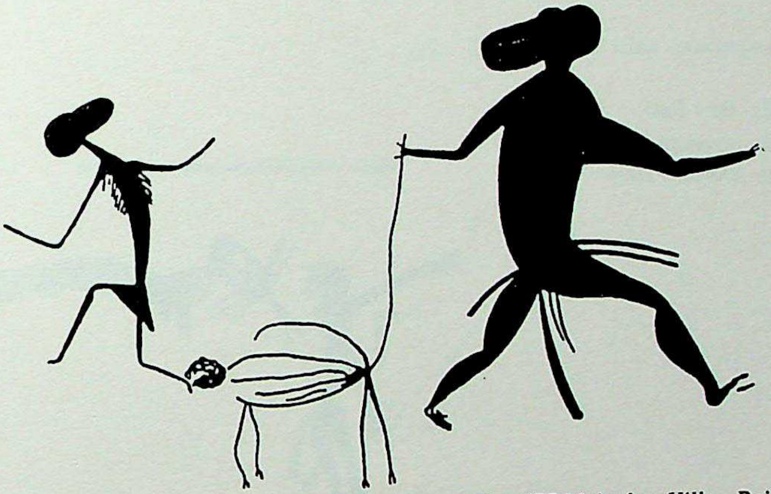


Fig.:677:Mahadeo Hills - Rajat Phrabat

Another group of "fabulous beings" is known only from the Mahadeo Hills. These animals are shown with the head of a horse, but the body is snake-like, elongated and even coiled (Figs.: 679-82). In several instances a rider, armed with a dagger or an axe, mounts these animals. In one case a woman and a man are riding on such a being. The man is shown with strangely twisted legs (Fig.: 682).

These fabulous animals show strong parallels to *makrama* figures which are so well known from early historic sculptures (Fig.: 678). These *makrama* figures from the Mahadeo Hills rock pictures are reminiscent of the "Ghandara-Palettes", or compartmented stone plates, which show often the figure of nerides on a monster --half horse, half-coiled dragon (Francfort,H.P., 1979.).

Fig.:678

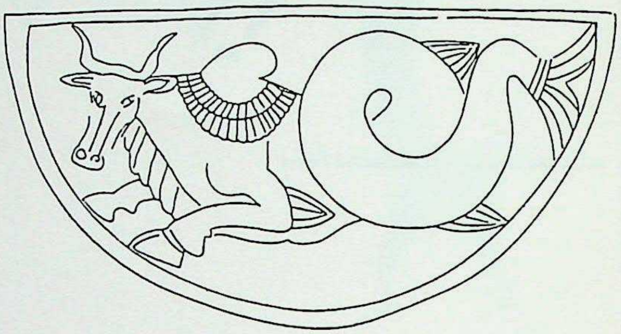


Fig.:678:Bharhut
Fig.:679:Mahadeo Hills- Bori East
Fig.:680:Mahadeo Hills- Agamdwar
Fig.:681:Mahadeo Hills- Dorothy Deep

Fig.:679

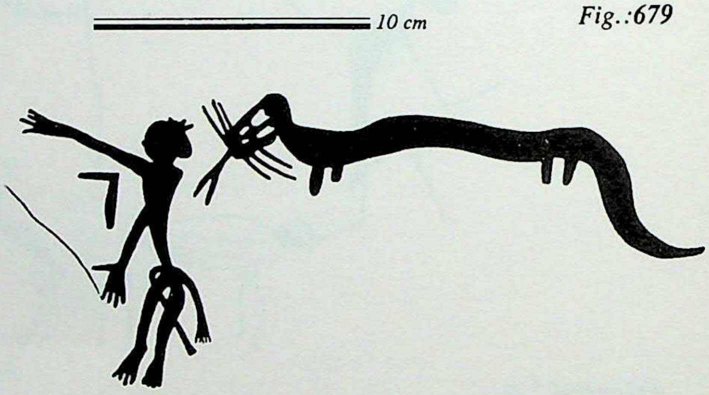


Fig.:681

10 cm

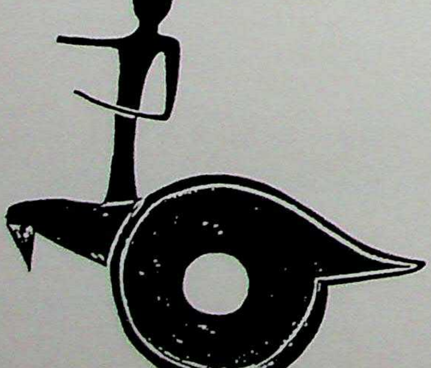
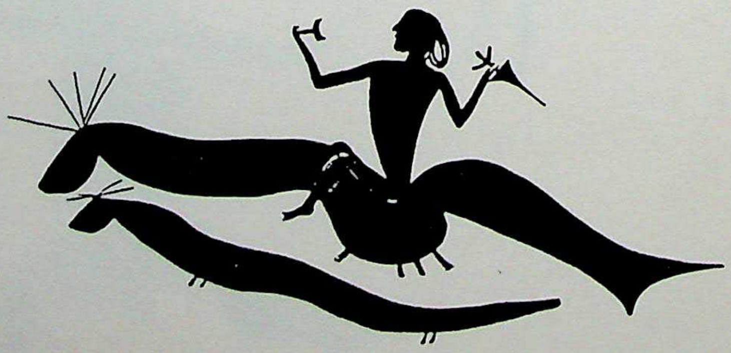


Fig.:680



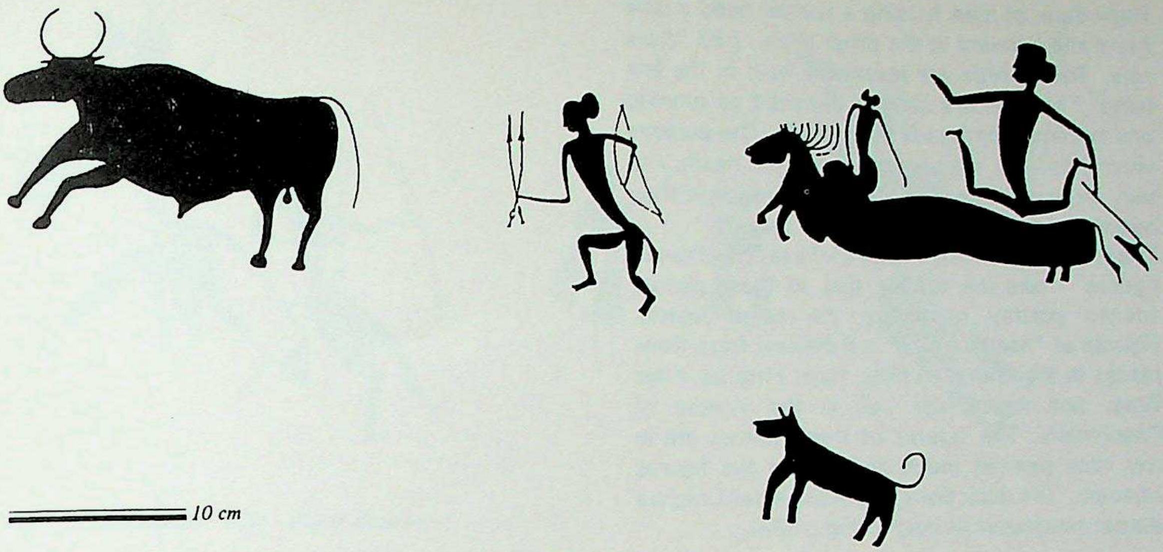


Fig.:682:Mahadeo Hills - Agamdwar

Depictions of men holding a human head in one hand and a sword in the other (Figs.: 683-7) are rare. The swords are invariably held in the left hand. The men are always depicted as running and turning their heads backwards. The persons wear horn-like decorations on their head, and very large earrings. The dislocated heads in their hands are decorated in the same way.
The iconographic uniformity of these "headhunter figures" make me believe that all these picture scenes portray invariably the same legend. Figures of "headhunters" were found from three places in the Mahadeo Hills, Rajat Phrabat, Kites Crag, and Agamdwar --all in the vicinity of Panchmarhi. The figures of these heroes are in any case painted much larger than the figures adjacent. The depictions at the site Kites Crag are almost one meter in height (Fig.: 684).

Fig.:683:Mahadeo Hills - Agamdwar

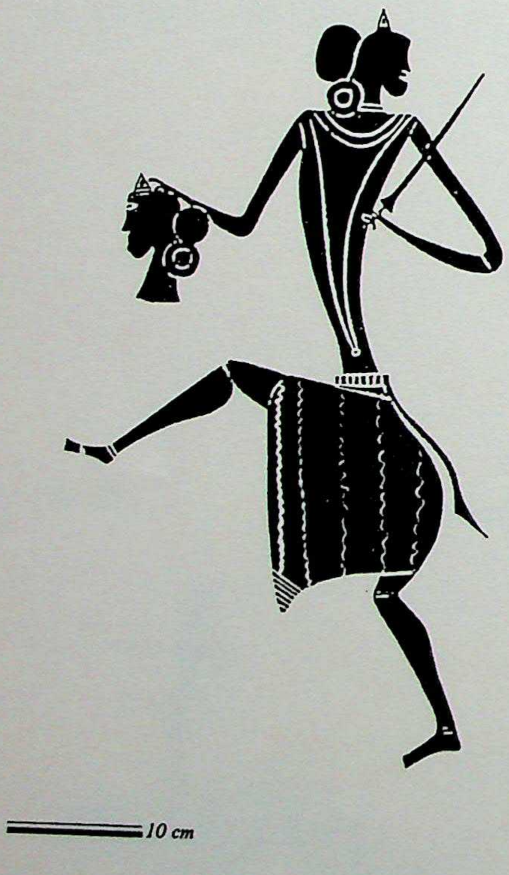
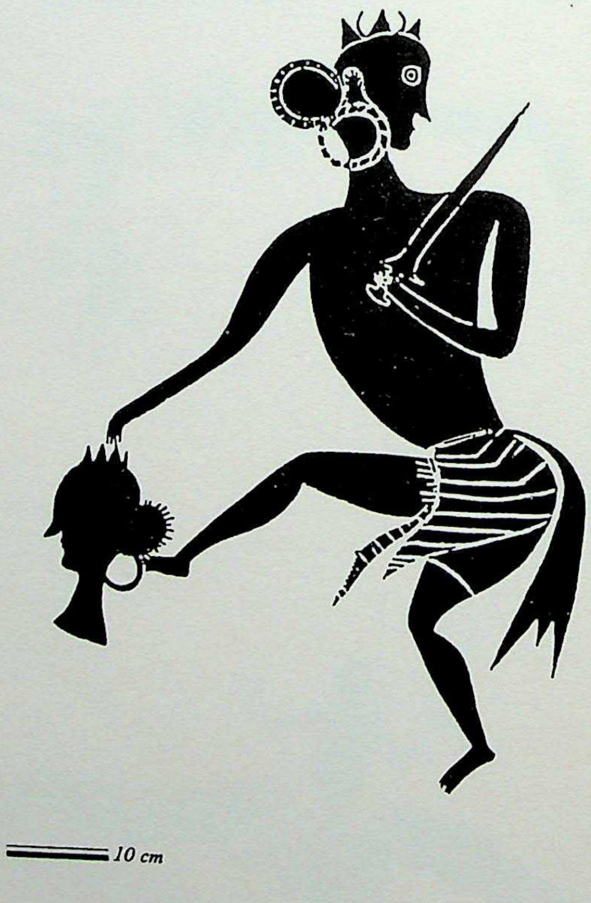


Fig.:684:Mahadeo Hills - Kites Crag



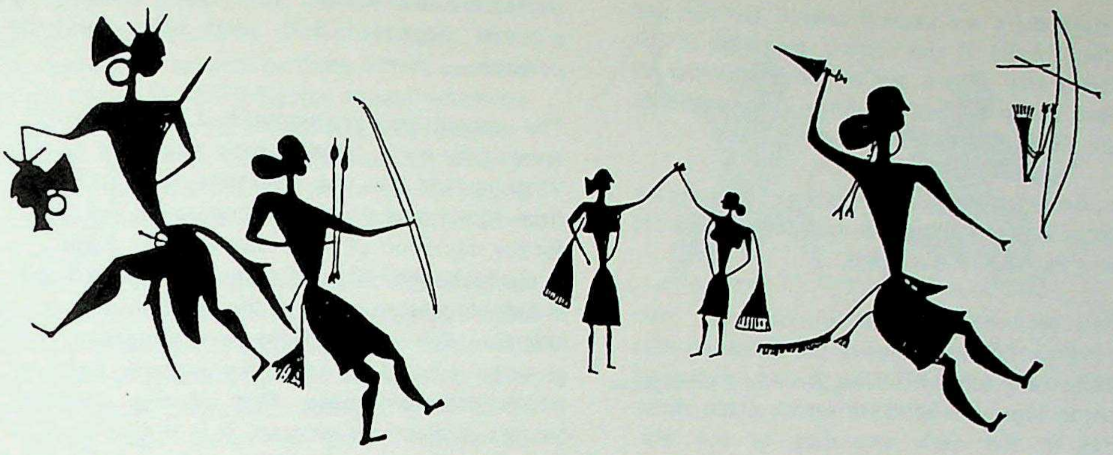


Fig.:685:Mahadeo Hills - Rajat Phrabat

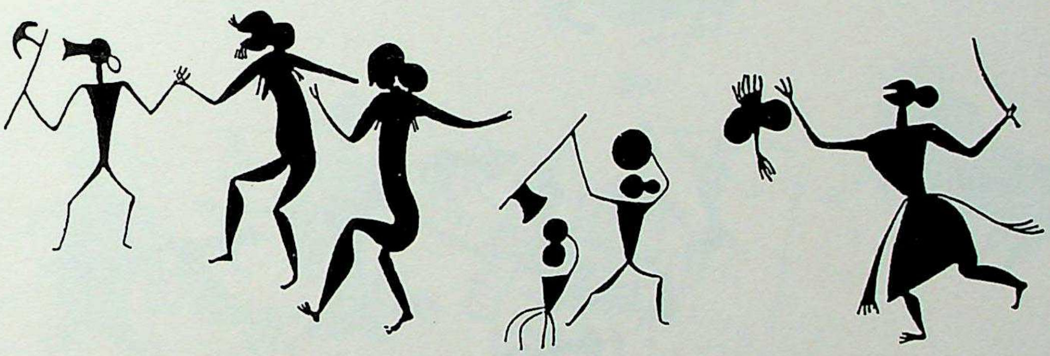


Fig.:686:Mahadeo Hills - Rajat Phrabat

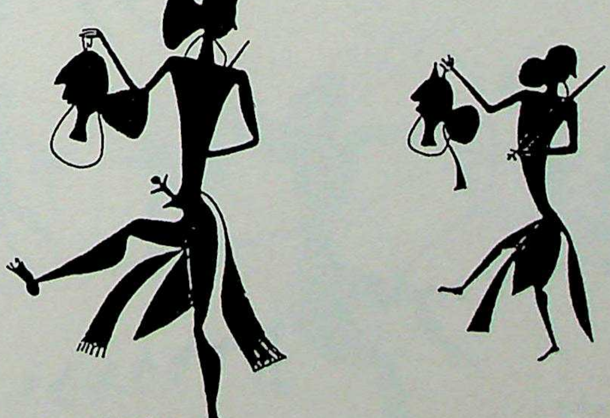


Fig.:687:Mahadeo Hills - Rajat Phrabat

Although there are several unique stylistic and thematic facets in the historic paintings of the Mahadeo Hills, there are an equal number of parallels to the historic paintings in the not very distant Vindhya Hills.

Arms, horse trappings and dresses of persons are to a large extent comparable with those shown in pictures in the Vinhdhya Hills.

Parallels between the "Kushana-pictures" from the Vindhya Hills and those of the Mahadeo Hills are particularly strong. I have already explained the chronological indications which place these pictures in the early centuries of our era. Particularly interesting is the depiction, in both rock-art regions, of enthroned persons. In the Mahadeo Hills quite often these persons are depicted *en face*, the seat between their widespread legs (Fig.: 641). Comparable depictions are known only from chalcolithic pictures (Figs.: 428-9), and from Kushana coinage.

The umbrella as paraphernalia of social elevation appears in early historic rock paintings of the Vindhya Hills for the first time. The paintings from Tikula give a clear chronological indication for the depiction of the umbrella (Fig.: 545).
In the Mahadeo Hills umbrellas are depicted only in a single picture group at the site Banya Bury in Marodeo (Fig.: 688). Here several persons are grouped around a cross-like square, four of which hold umbrellas. One of the umbrella bearers is clearly a woman. It is unclear, what the central cross might indicate. It could denote a sacral space as well as a profane "chopar" or games-board. One could even suggest a sacral game board, something from which one of the great Indian epics --the *Mahabharata*-- flowed.

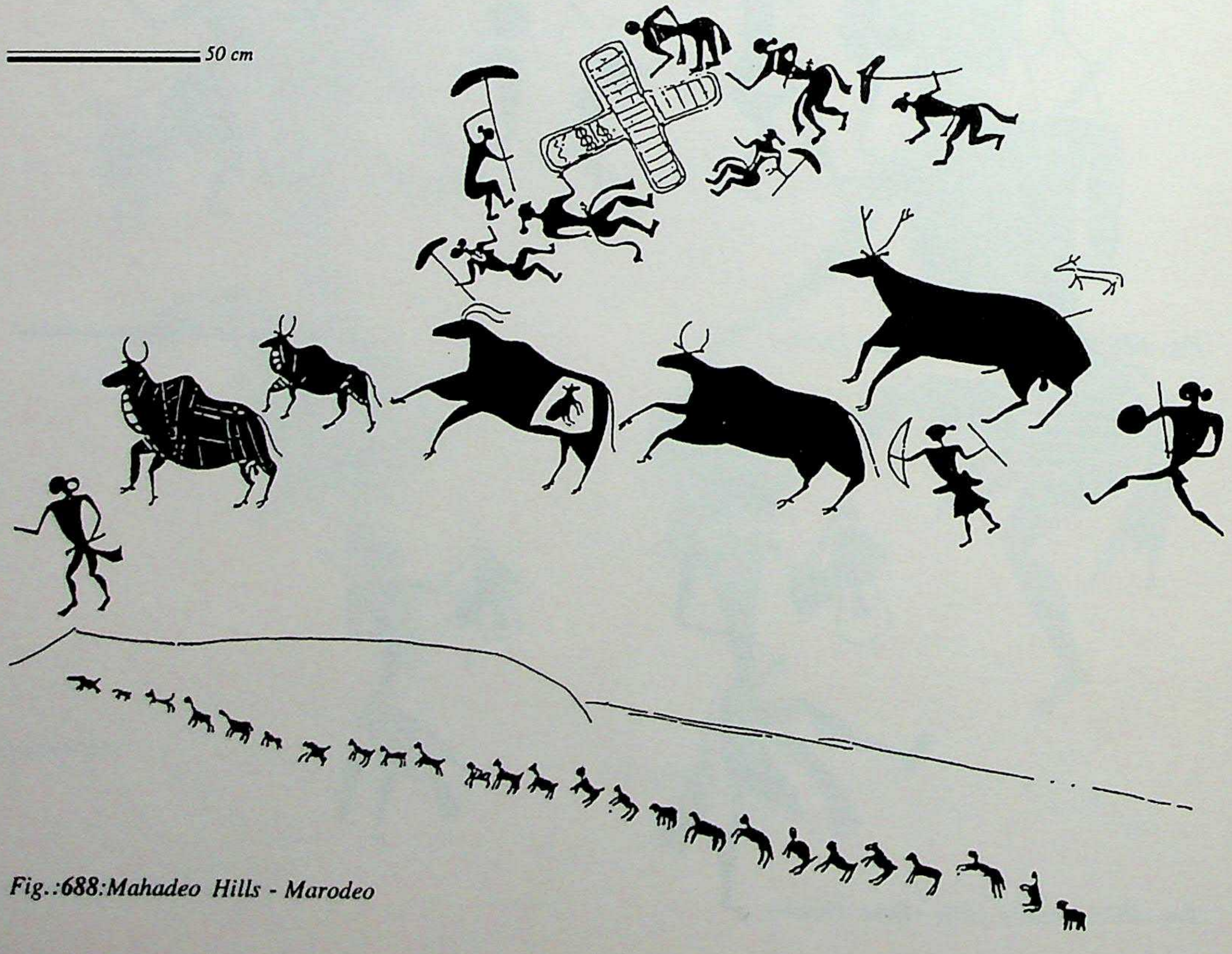


Fig.:688:Mahadeo Hills - Marodeo

Depictions of multi-armed gods or heroes are missing in the pictures of the Mahadeo Hills. Still, there are several pictures which seem to narrate myths in which figures appear which are known from the great Indian epic, *Ramayana*.
Monkeys in human attire are seen dancing or fighting (Figs.: 689,691). This of course recalls immediately the figure of Hanuman and his army of monkeys.
Another large group shows a hero with a barrel-shaped body, armed with bow and arrows and a sword. At his side is a chimera (Fig.: 690). The organization of these groups is reminiscent of the chalcolithic procession scenes (Figs.: 428-9), in which too, somewhat portly heroes are surrounded by attendant musicians and jesters.

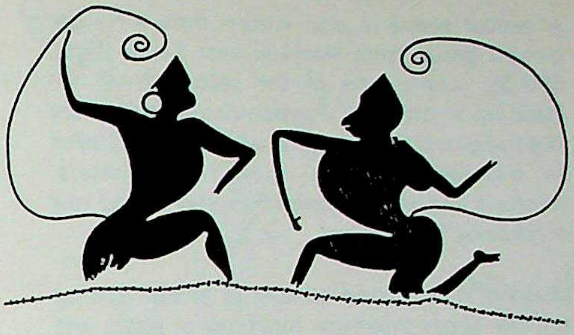


Fig.:689:Mahadeo Hills - Kites Crag

Fig.:690:Mahadeo Hills - Agamdwar

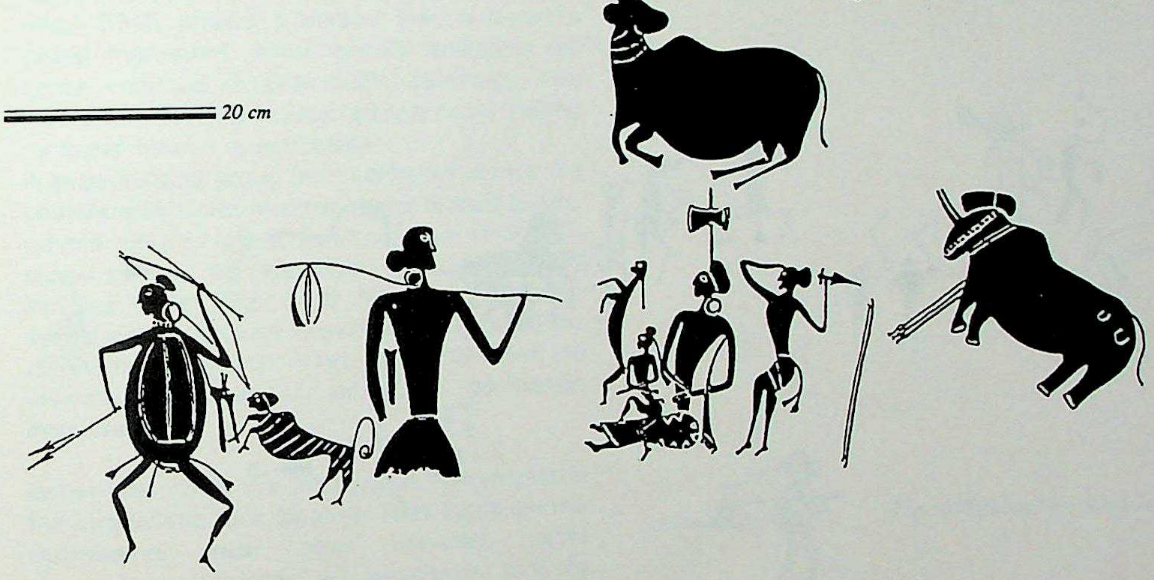
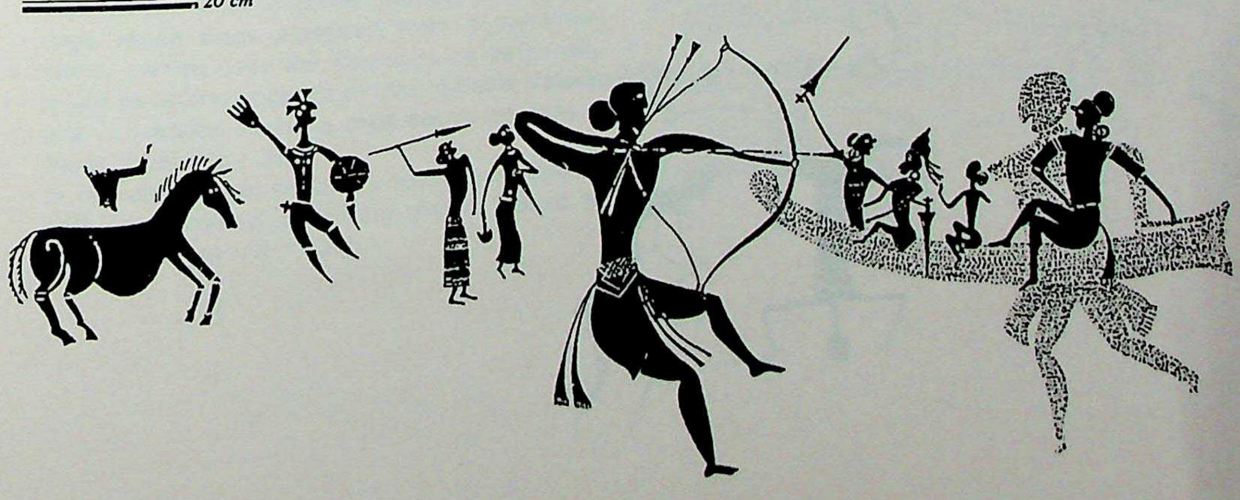


Fig.:691:Mahadeo Hills - Agamdwar



A similar scene is also known from a historic picture group from Naryauli near Sagar (Figs.: 692-3), where one of the jesters is shown standing on his head. Possibly these pictures are illustrations of festivities, in which jesters played an indispensable role. Even today, jesters, acrobats and show-swordsmen play a vital role in religious processions.

I believe that a good number of picture scenes actually show theatrical functions or plays, and several of the chimeras and fantastic beings might be characters from these plays. Particularly the dancers with interlinked arms and the phallic dancers from the chalcolithic procession scenes recall the old Indian mystery plays.

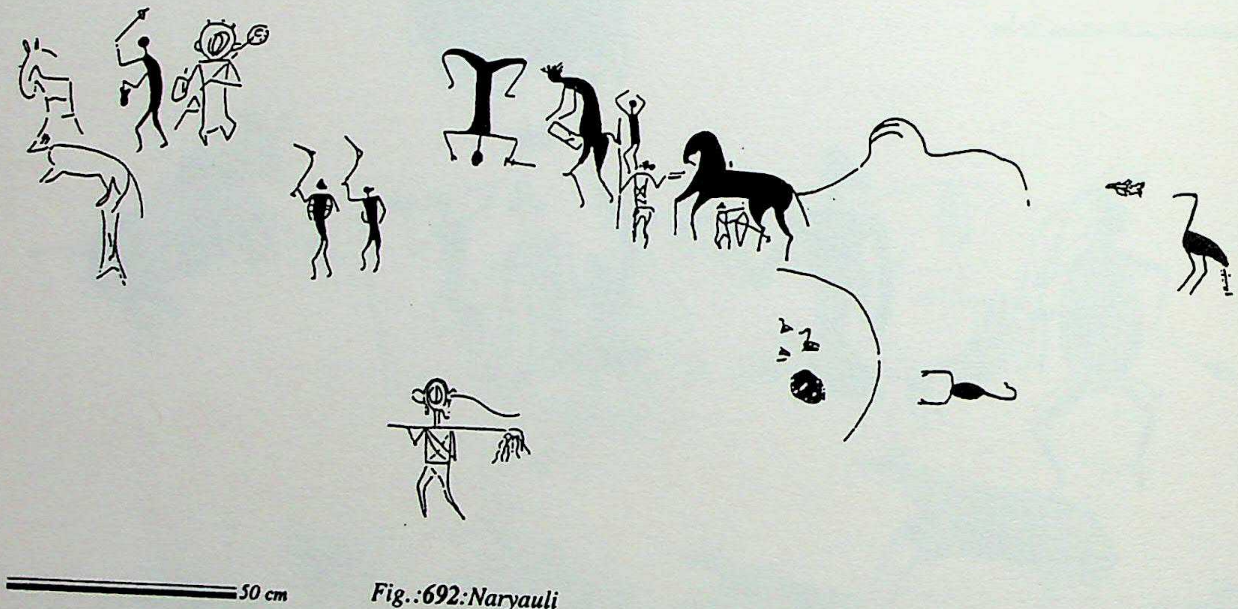
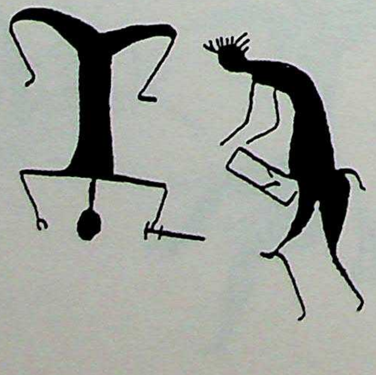


Fig.:692:Naryauli

Fig.:693(from Fig.:692):Naryauli



The depiction of musical instruments in these procession scenes therefore is not surprising, rather it is surprising, that musical instruments are not shown more frequently.

The pictures of the hunters and gatherers show almost no musical instruments. Only very few artifacts may be interpreted as musical instruments. In a dance scene one of the participants holds a comb-like instrument, which could be a thumb piano with vibrating tongues of different lengths (Fig.: 233). Since such an instrument is depicted but once, its interpretation as a musical instrument is most problematic. In the same dance group several persons show a small circle in front of their mouths, which I take as indication of singing or talking. This painting belongs to the earliest stylistic group available in Indian rock-art. A further painting from Kathotia (Fig.: 694), shows a person with a bow-like string instrument, which closely resembles the harps depicted in chalcolithic paintings. This instrument is similarly depicted only once, making its interpretation questionable.
A large hunting group from Lakhajoar shows the beaters with uniform instruments in their hands, whose nature --on account of their diminutive size-- cannot be identified, but they might indicate rattles (Fig.: 118). No other musical or sound instruments are known from the mesolithic paintings. It is surprising that there are no indications of drums or other percussion instruments.

Better identifiable are the musical instruments in the chalcolithic rock pictures. Here harps are the instruments most often depicted, while percussion instruments are surprisingly rare, as are wind-instruments.

In a few procession scenes (Figs.: 429-30) persons are seen holding round instruments in their hands, which might be cymbals. Equally, the large round discs extended from a porterage stake, carried over the shoulders of two men, might be drums or gongs of considerable size. In one procession scene a man seems to beat a frame drum (Fig.: 392).
In late-chalcolithic picture groups, there appear horns or trumpets, which are always related to fighting scenes (Fig.: 422).

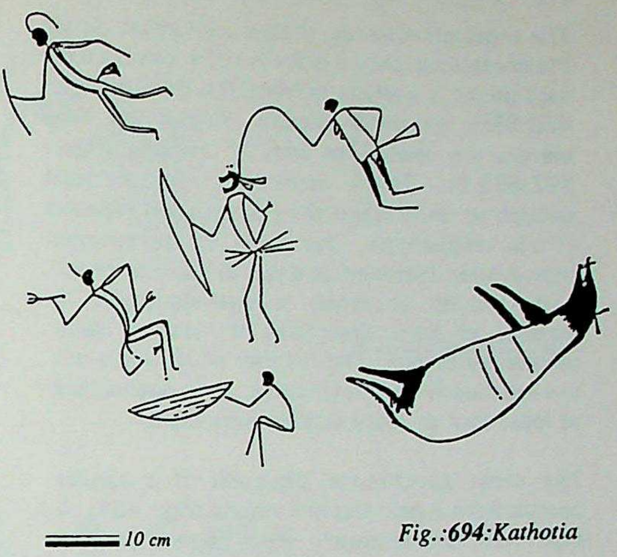
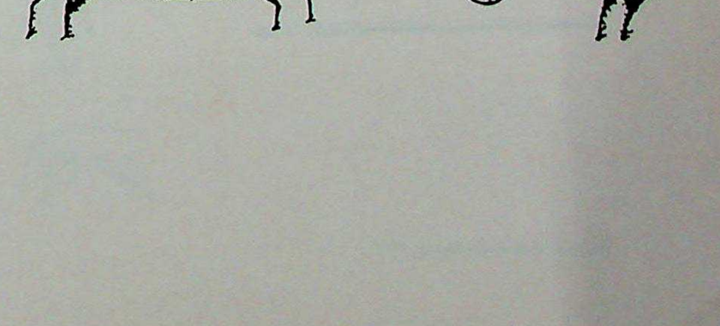


Fig.:694:Kathotia

Fig.:695(from Fig.:428):Jaora



The most prominently shown instrument during the chalcolithic period is the harp. In one case the harp player is walking in front of a chariot (Figs.: 428,695), in other picture groups the harp players are related to lines of dancers (Figs.: 392,696-9). These depictions are detailed enough to understand the construction features of the instruments. The harps are constructed from a bow, fastened at one end into a resonant body, which at times is oval-elongated. A number of harp depictions do without such resonance bodies. The number of strings is not always clearly understandable, but it seems that at least four or more strings were used.

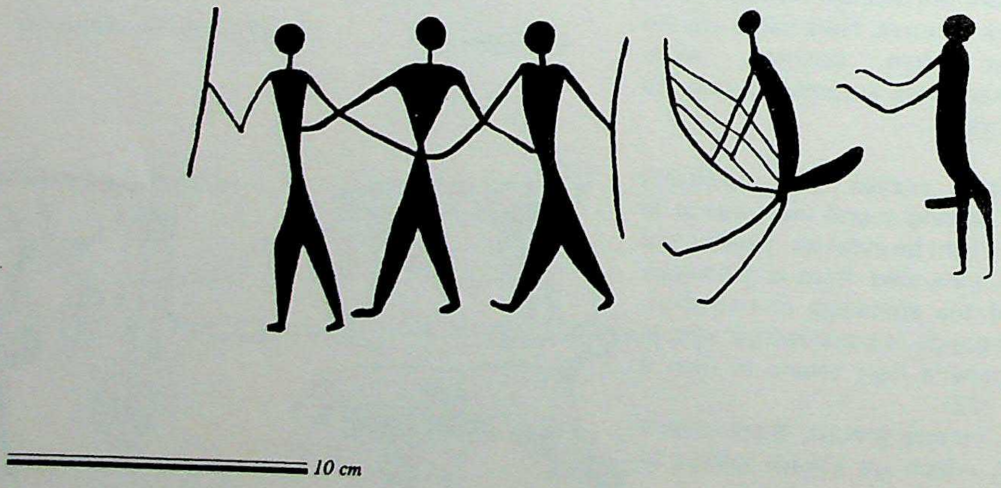
The most spectacular depiction of a harpist comes from a painting in Kathotia (Fig.: 401). A man with an obviously erect phallus plays a harp, while several equally ithyphallic men do a chain dance. The basic theme of this picture is also known from other picture groups from the same general region (Figs.: 696-8).

A harp is also depicted lying on the ground in a painting from Ganesh Ghati (Fig.: 645). This painting shows two men, one armed with bow and arrow, the other with a club. Between them are animals of different species like antelopes, pigs, birds, bees, fish, turtle, snake and crocodile. On the ground before the bow-man lies a harp with a round resonant body.
This painting is interesting, since several animals portrayed here are rarely depicted elsewhere.

In Dekan --a site near the Chambal Valley-- several harp players and dancers are placed close to people carrying large axes (Figs.: 404,699).

In the historic rock pictures of the Vindhya Hills harps are not shown. This is rather surprising, since this instrument is known from many early buddhist reliefs, as well as from the Gupta coinage.
In the Mahadeo Hills several depictions of harp-players are known from historic picture scenes (Figs.: 560,675,706).

Fig.:696:Firengi



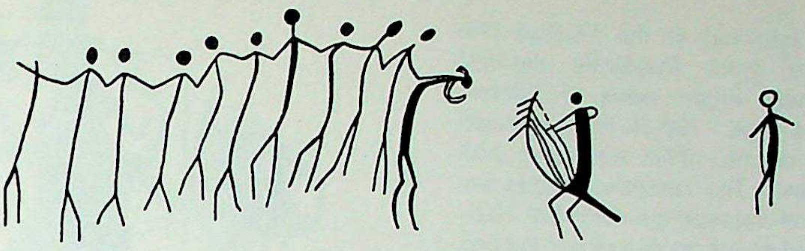


Fig.:697:Firengi

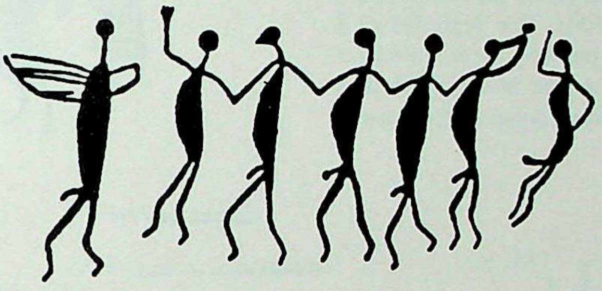
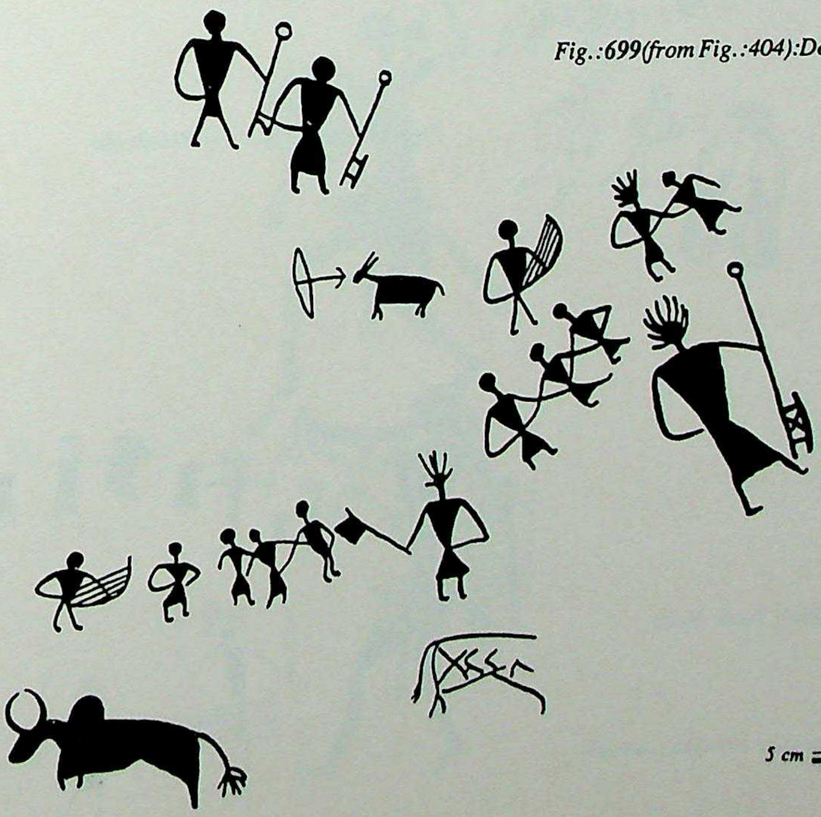


Fig.:698(from Fig.:376):Ganesh Ghati

Fig.:699(from Fig.:404):Dekan - Adarshila



In the historic paintings in the Vindhya Hills drums are the most frequently depicted instruments. These drums come in different shapes and sizes (Figs.: 700-2). More common are the bi-sided drums, which are played with sticks or by hand. The resonance-bodies are cylindrical or barrel-shaped (Figs.: 557,700,702). Hour-glass shaped drums are depicted in fighting scenes (Figs.: 568-9,701). At Naryauli a barrel type drum is shown held upright between the legs of one man (Fig.: 692).

In the rock pictures of the Southern Deccan musical instruments were rarely identified. A few depictions of wind instruments are known from the Oniki Kandi (Fig.: 704). The depiction of a veena comes from a painting near Pattadkal (Fig.: 703). The veena is also shown held by a three-eyed god at the site Tikula in the Gwalior District (Fig.: 549).

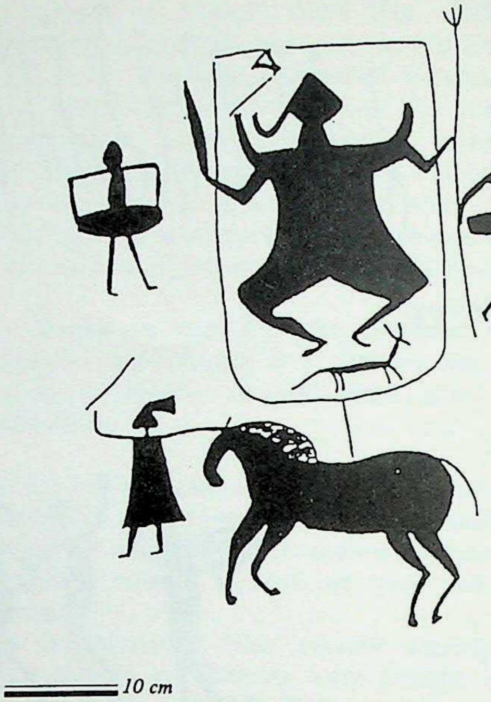


*Fig.:**700**(from Fig.:557):Bhimbetka*

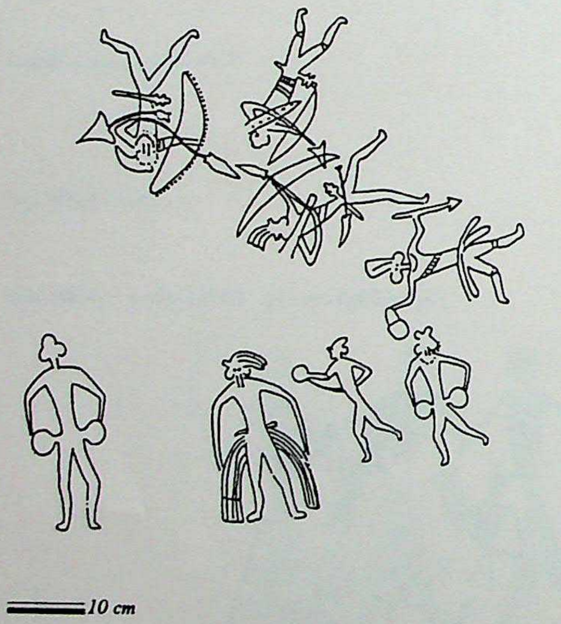
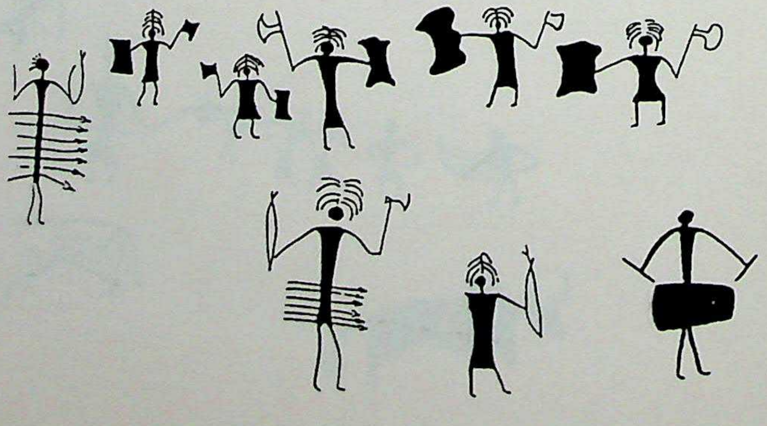


*Fig.:**701**(from Fig.:569):Bhimbetka*

*Fig.:**702**:Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla*



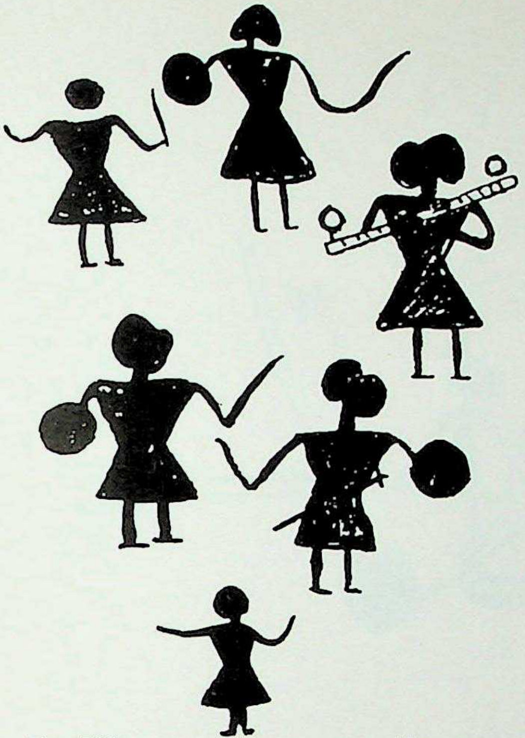


Fig.:703

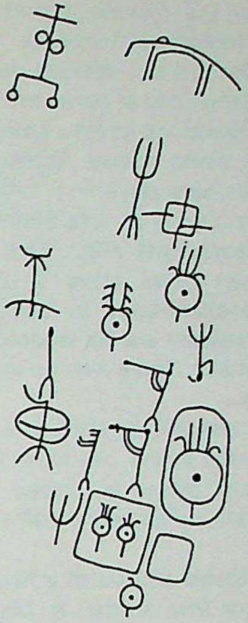


Fig.:704

Fig.:705

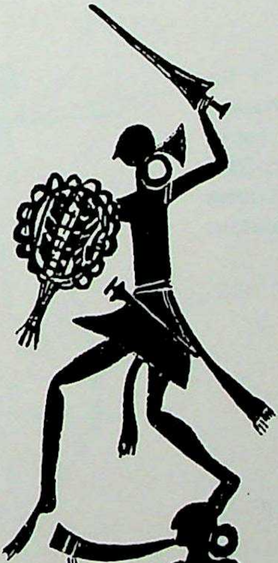


Fig.:703:Pattadkal
Fig.:704:Benakal Forest - Oniki Kandi
Fig.:705(from Fig.:618):Marodeo

In the historic pictures of the Mahadeo Hills musical instruments are frequently shown. Besides the detailed depictions of harps several depictions of horns are known (Fig.: 705).

Depictions of harp players are mostly embedded in camp scenes. Quite famous is the picture of the harp player in a small shelter above the cave sanctuary of Jota Shanka close to the village of Panchmarhi (Fig.: 706). This painting shows a man who plays a five-stringed harp. The resonant-body is basket shaped. Beside the musician are his weapons, bow and arrows and an axe. Three women and a child are sitting close by.

A similarly detailed picture of a harp player was found at the site Kites Crag (Fig.: 650). Here a harp player is placed in close relation to a honeycomb and a load carrier.

Another picture of a harp player was found in a very low shelter in Marodeo (Fig.: 657). The scene is difficult to interpret, since no position in this shelter allows us to view the whole composition as one. Here as well the figure of the harp player is placed in close vicinity of honeycombs.

At the site Rajat Phrabat the harp player is found in a picture group which also comprises a "demon" (Fig.: 675).

The depictions of musical instruments in the Indian rock pictures prove that musical instruments of standardized shapes and forms were widely in use at least from the chalcolithic period onwards. From the pictures it becomes clear that instrumental music played an important part in theatrical cultic festivities.

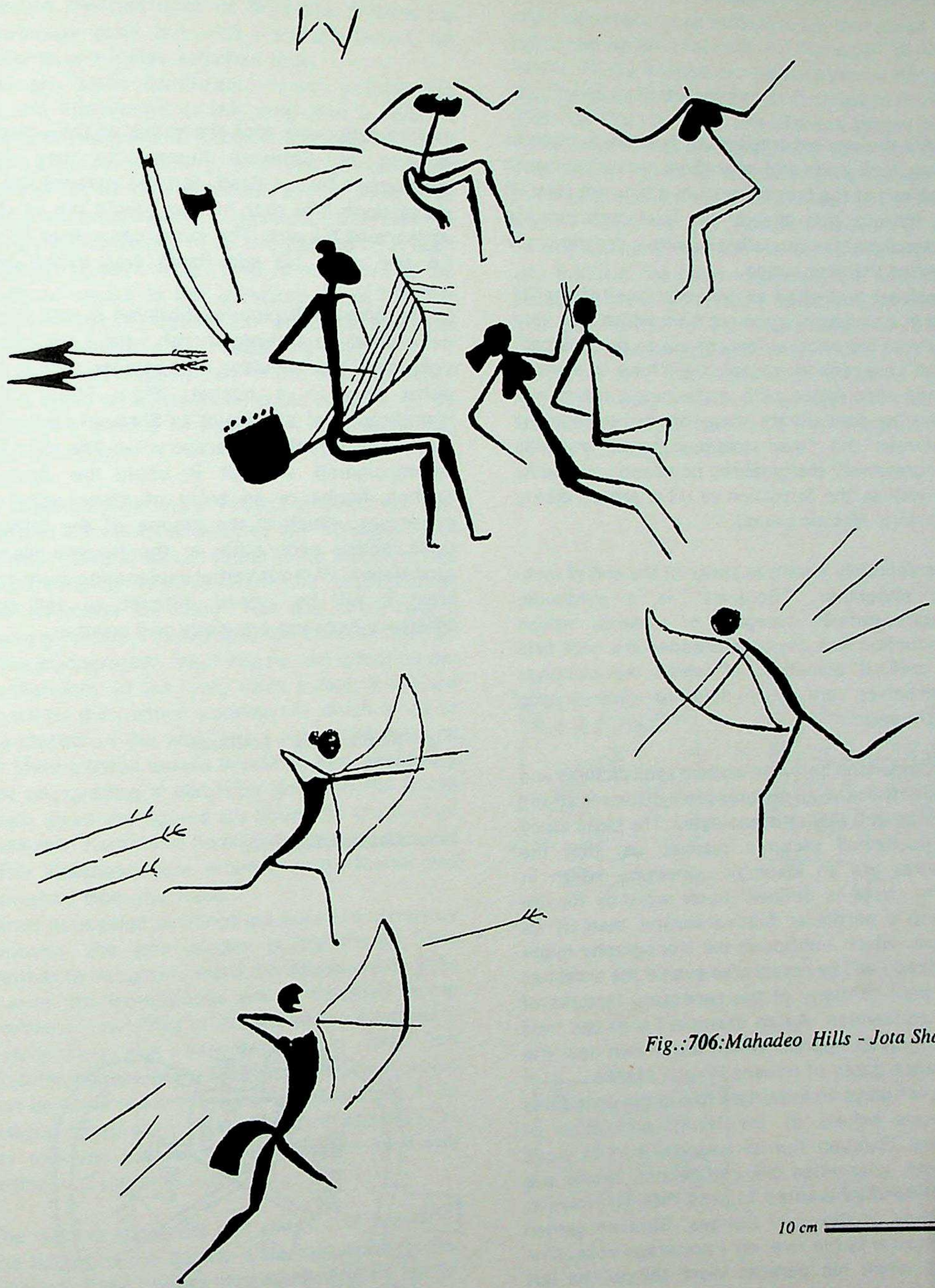


Fig.:706:Mahadeo Hills - Jota Shanka

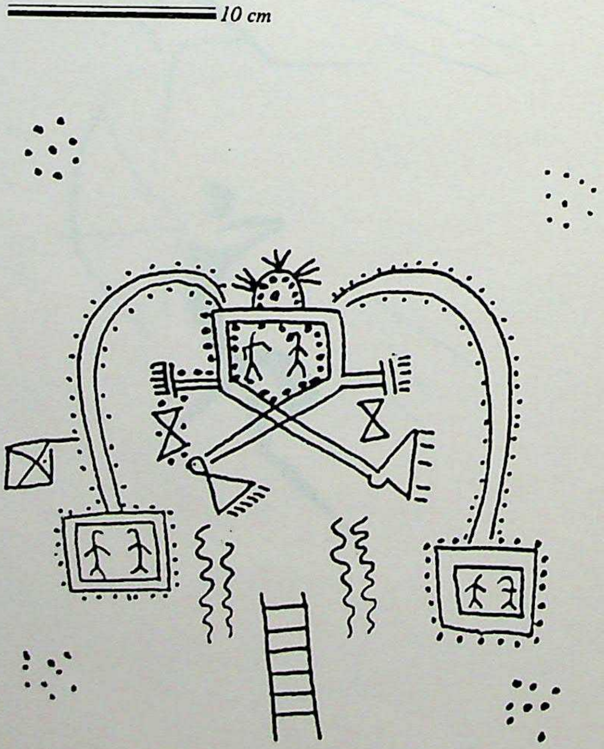
The End of Rock-Art?

Why the age-old tradition of fashioning pictures over rock walls and in shelters was given up at the end of the first millennium A.D. is not clear. It is obvious that already the later rock pictures were done less carefully and with a progressively limited thematic range.
Rock-art flourished as only one facet of applied art in a social environment from which only very indirect historical evidences are to be expected. And here rock-art research will have to work in close accordance with archaeology, which will have to concentrate more on the relationship between the "mainstream cultures" and the progressively marginalized population segments as well as the formation of tribal groups during the early historic period.

It is definitely wrong to speak of the end of rock-art altogether. "Rock-art" is a synthetic, material-defined category of remains, whose production was always embedded in a wide field of cultural activities, of which the paintings themselves are only able to give cryptic information.

A comparison between ancient rock pictures and modern housewall pictures often discloses strong stylistic and thematic analogies. The close study of housewall pictures teaches us, that the pictures are an ideologic construct, which in many cases is defined much more by its use during a particular festival-season than by its shape, which --although the iconography might be fixed-- will be recognized even if the artist has not kept to many of the necessary features of this convention. As an example I shall use here the Shravan figures, which are drawn near the entrance gates of houses in rural Malwa.
Shravan plays an important role in the uncodified religious beliefs of the Hindu population of Malwa. Shravan Kumar was the son of pious parents, who when old, had become feeble and blind. As they wanted to pass their last days at the bank of the river Ganges, Shravan carried them towards the river on a porterage yoke. One night, when his parents were thirsty, he left them to fetch water from the bank of the river. While he filled his vessel, it so happened, that Dasaratha --the king of Ayodya-- was out hunting, and mistaking the sound as that of a deer drinking, the king aimed his arrow, fatally wounding Shravan Kumar. The king, realizing his unfortunate deed, took the vessel to the waiting parents of Shravan Kumar, to beg for forgiveness for his deed. But the parents laid a curse upon him that he too would die in the absence of his son. The curse came true since he died while his son Rama was exiled and away.
In the housewall pictures Shravan is invariably depicted as an anthropomorph with a porterage yoke over the shoulder, his parents sitting on either side in a basket (Fig.: 707). The identification of this figure as Shravan Kumar is only possible by the porterage yoke. The reduced anthropomorph without it could be Kanya-Krishna, Radha or an array of other gods or goddesses, which in the course of the annual cycle replace each other at the housewalls in rural Malwa. Without verbal explanation from the artist it will be indeed difficult to tell the difference between one deity and another.

Fig.:707:Bhanpura - Lodkhedi



One woman in a village in Malwa showed us a picture she had done of Shravana without his porterage yoke, but with a tractor instead, his parents in a trolley attached to it.

In many cases identification is only possible due to the knowledge of the time-span a resident deity is supposed to occupy. The presence of a particular deity during an inappropriate period would not be only eccentric but at times even counterproductive. For example, the face of Shravan Kumar has to be overpainted or at least erased on days when food is sacrificed in the form of smoke to the ancestors, since Shravan Kumar is apt to swallow the "dhoop" or sacrificial smoke (Neumayer,H., 1988:103-34).

The repetitive application of the same figures in succession on housewalls, could account for the repetitive placing of figures on rock walls over and over again.

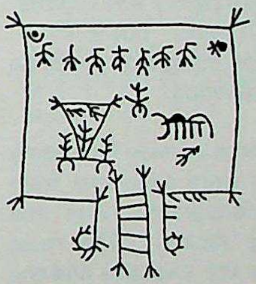
It could be observed in housewall paintings, that certain iconographic features are "stronger" than others. Several times I found in the wall paintings depictions of Krishna with two small figures placed inside his body. The two small figures belong to the iconography of Shravan Kumar. This iconographic "slip" has no real effect on the authenticity of the icon, since a deity is defined more by the festival calendar in which it has to be placed on the wall. For a viewer inculturated in Malwa these details would be very secondary for recognising a particular deity on the house wall, since the figures are bound by the festival calendar. Kanya will be placed at the house walls after Rakshabandan, when Shravan Kumar has vanished from the walls.

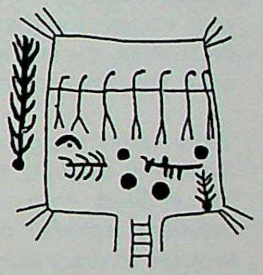
Since housewall paintings are done exclusively by women, the iconography is transferred from mother to daughter, and if the daughter becomes a wife, the iconography will be modified by her mother-in-law. That in this situation iconographic details are not very stable is only too understandable. Many iconographic details which can be observed in the actual paintings cannot be substantiated even by the artists themselves, as for example the ladder, which is an invariable entity in these pictures.

The queries about the use and aim of several of the iconographic details were answered by the masters of the houses very authoritatively, while the women --who painted the pictures-- interpreted these details totally differently. It was obvious that the men used socially accepted ideologies as the basis of their interpretations, which at times had little or nothing to do with the subject of the pictures at all.

The dichotomy of the knowledge between men and women becomes evident in another group of paintings which concerns the "lineage" of the family. These lineage pictures are placed above the fireplaces in the kitchen of the houses (Figs.: 708-10). The kitchen is one of these spaces in a home, where men are hardly ever admitted.

The "lineage" pictures are done by the women of the house, their iconography transferred from the mother-in-law to the daughter-in-law. If no "lineage-painting tradition" exists in a family, or this tradition has been neglected, the wife can introduce her own. In many cases it so happens, that the master of the house does not even know of this lineage pictures, which in most cases are very feeble drawings, made of haldi and darkened and obscured by soot. So even in the nuclear family there is no one interpretation of these pictogrammes.





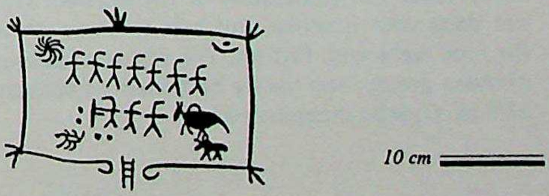


Fig.:708:Runija
Fig.:709:Runija
Fig.:710:Runija

Compared to the possibilities we have of interpreting a living pictorial tradition, where artists and viewers can still be questioned, we have to realize that rock pictures which were done maybe thousands of years back, will, to a large extent, remain a book of seven seals.
Still, Indian rock pictures show a continuity and trends which allow us interpret them beyond a pure aesthetic appreciation. The outstanding quality of the pictures is the linear-directed narrative progress of action. Acting persons or animals form a thematic centre where cooperating --or antagonistic-- figures meet. The direction of movement or cooperation is indicated by the direction of the figures as well as by directional markers. These markers are the direction of the steps, the direction of the view, the indication of the direction by pointed arrows and spears or other implements. Besides these indicators each stylistic group has its own repertoire of abstract signs, which might be understandable in relation to other figures.

Altogether "abstract" rock pictures are very rare in India. Besides the paintings and engravings from Bainete Banda in Andhra Pradesh and the pictures in the Sambalpur and Sundargarh Districts of Orissa, there are hardly any regions with exclusively abstract figures. But even in these sites, the late stylistic groups of paintings are in the usual narrative tradition.

In the historic pictures there is an ever increasing number of symbols which were peculated from the codified religious iconography into the traditional spheres of the rock-art. The most depicted abstract signs are the swastika and the trisul.

The latest rock pictures in the Vindhya Mountains as well as in other regions of India are done carelessly and without any sophistication. In many cases the application of the pigment was not done with brushes, but just smeared on to the rock walls with fingers. The stylistic features of these groups can hardly be tested on account of their stylistic inconsistency.

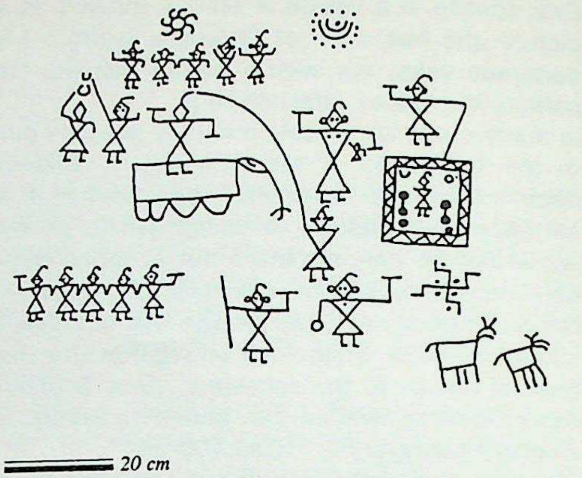
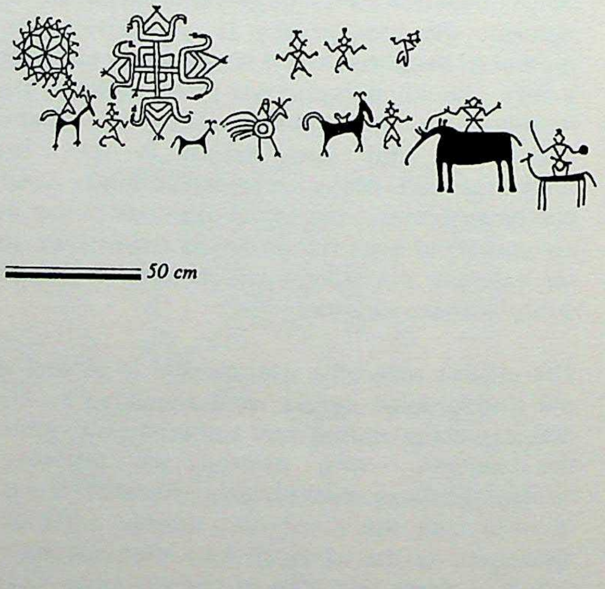


Fig.:711:Bhanpura - Lodkhedi

Fig.:712:Narsinghgarh - Khakshila



Around A.D. 1 000 rock-art as a creative tradition came to its end in the Vindhya Hills. Even places still frequented, either due to the proximity of a temple or a village, do not show pictures much later than this date. In some of the hermitages where rock pictures of different periods abounded, they were whitewashed over or just ignored. No rock-art tradition was ever revitalized by a stimulus directly taken from earlier pictures

Even inscriptions from the last one thousand years are rather rare at rock-art sites. The last writing style which is found frequently in rock shelters is the Shank style, a highly decorative Brahmi from the second half of the first millennium A.D., which due to the exaggerated flourishes cannot be read any more.

Painted inscriptions are found close to pilgrim places, but these hardly ever go further back than the eighteenth century.
Graffiti, now disfiguring rock pictures are in most cases very recent, most of them done only after the "discovery" of the rock pictures by antiquarians.

At many of the South Indian rock picture sites, where large spaces of the rock surfaces are covered by rock bruisings, many a shepherd boy tries his hand at the rejuvenation of ancient rock bruisings, introducing at the same time iconogrammes of their everyday life.

Visuals such as party symbols or product labels make their appearance between prehistoric rock pictures. The original symbol of the Indian Congress party --a cow and a suckling calf-- is one of the symbols often found, placed side by side with neolithic bulls.

In recent years these granite rocks --particularly those adjacent to roads-- became a battle-field of party propaganda. Party symbols and logos in huge drawings and letters cover surfaces of rocks and entire hills.
After a few generations symbols like "the hand" of the Congress party, "hills with rising sun" of the DMK party, " sprout with two leaves" of the AiDMK party, the "sickle and hammer", "bicycle", "two pigeons billing" and the "cock" of the other heiress and in between inscriptions like "Jesus Comes Soon" will put future rock-art researches in considerable bewilderment.
At one of these hills in which I searched for rock pictures under the merciless sun of a hot afternoon, I saw a promising shelter across a small vale. I declared this rock shelter as the limit of my day's work, made my way through the thorny shrubbery which filled the valley, to reach the promising rock wall and shelter. When I reached there, breathless and scratched, I found a racy symbol of four arrows extending from one centre with the inscription "ALL WALL RESERVED FOR DMK 1990". It was in the hot summer of 1989.

Notes

(1)
Ashmounds are the remains of burnt cattle pens from the neolithic period (Allchin,B. & Allchin, F.R., 1982:123-4). The sizes of these ash-heaps vary, the largest are several meters high and more than 100 metres across. They consist of solidified grey ashes and are frequently found close to neolithic settlements in the Southern Deccan, particularly in the Krishna-Tungabhadra Doab.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth Century there were several theories about the origins of these ash mounds. The earlier visitors to these mounds were taken by the idea, to view them as remains of ancient fire worship, or even more specifically, as expressed in the titles of the papers by M.Taylor, one of the early diggers of megalithic remains, as "Cromolechs, Cairns and other Ancient Scytho-Druidical Remains in the Principality of Shorapur" (Taylor,M., 1853:380-429). A few years later the title of the paper extended the array of Scythians and Druids with the Celts (Taylor,M., 1862:329-62; Congreve,H., 1844:47-51, 1861:205-11, 1873:86-8, 1878:150-68). Yet another school of thought declared the ash mounds as the remains of pyres into which the womenfolk of cities flung themselves when defeat at the hands of enemies was unavoidable.

(2)
Bhima or Bhimsen was the most powerful hero of the five Pandava brothers, whose antagonism with the Kauravas is told in the great Indian national epic the *Mahabharata*.

Bhima is also important in the folklore of many tribal groups in Central India, and is considered the embodiment of strength (Elwin,V., 1936(1958):183-6).

(3)
The percentages of the particular animals are: Bovids: 13,5 %; Pigs: 11,5 %; Antelopes: 11,5 %; Cervids: 2,7 %; Monkeys: 2,7 %; Elephants: 2,7 %; Herbivores (unidentifiable): 32,5 %; Carnivores: 2,7 %; Fish: 9,4 %; Turtles: 4,7 %; Lizards: 0,7 %; Unidentifiable animals: 4,8 %; Zoomorphs(?): 2 %;.

(4)
The burial was found during the excavation conducted by the Saugar University in rock shelter III F 21. It disclosed a skeleton, the head of which was placed inside a chalcolithic jar. Unfortunately, no further report is available yet.

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Fig.: 105. Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 106. Bhojpur: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 107. Abchand: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 108. Gelpur: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 109. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 110. Chiklod: Mesolithic, Red with accompanying white lines.
Fig.: 111. Bhojpur: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 112. Bhopal: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 113. Badami(Aregudda): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 114. Badami: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 115. Badami(Hiregudda): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 116. Aiholi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 117. Badami: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 118. Benakal Forest(Mallapur):Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 119.(Detail from Fig.: 162). Hire Benakal: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 120. Jaora: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 121. Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red with traces of green accompanying lines.
Fig.: 122. Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 123. Robertsganj(Panchmukhi Romp): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 124. Gupha Masir: Mesolithic,Green contourlines with red infilling.
Fig.: 125. Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 126. Kerwaghat: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 127. Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 128.(Detail from Fig.: 127). Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 129. Bhimbetka: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 130. Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 131. Bhimbetka: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 132. Jaora: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 133. Bhopal(Dharampuri): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 134. Chibbar Nulla: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 135. Bangawan: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 136. Putli Karar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 137. Urden: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 138. Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 139. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 140. Urden: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 141. Urden: Mesolithic,Red.
Fig.: 142. Urden: Mesolithic,Red and (stippeled) yellow
Fig.: 143. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 144. Jaora: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 145. Chibbar Nulla: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 146. Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 147.(Detail from Fig.: 146). Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 148.(Detail from Fig.: 146). Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 149.(Detail from Fig.: 146). Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 150. Kharwai: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 151. Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 152. Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 153. Jaora: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 154. Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 155.(Detail from Fig.: 154). Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 156.(Detail from Fig.: 170). Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 157. Bhimbetka: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 158. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 159. Bhimbetka: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 160.(Detail from Fig.: 221). Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 161. Bhimbetka: Mesolithic, Red.

Fig.: 162. Benakal Forest(Hire Benakal):Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 163. Bari Dant: Mesolithic, Red with accompanying yellow lines.
Fig.: 164. Bhimbetka: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 165. Bhimbetka: Mesolithic, Yellow-Green-Red alternating.
Fig.: 166. Jaora: Mesolithic, Red with traces of white designs.
Fig.: 167. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 168. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red with traces of white infillings(stippeled).
Fig.: 169. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 170. Bhojpur: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 171. Abchand: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 172.(Detail from Fig.:1). Baldharia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 173. Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 174. Bhimbetka: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 175. Urden: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 176. Bhimbetka: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 177. Bhimbetka: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 178. Bhimbetka: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 179. Mahadeo Hills(Bori West): Mesolithic, Red, with parallel white lines.
Fig.: 180. Gupha Masir: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 181. Kowar Khoh: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 182. Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 183 Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 184. Mahadeo Hills(Bori East): Mesolithic, Red with parallel white lines.
Fig.: 210. Kharwai: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 185. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 186. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 187. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 188. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 189. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 190. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 191. Firengi: Mesolithic, White contourlines and (stippeled) white designs on red.
Fig.: 192. Mahadeo Hills(Bori West): Mesolithic, Red with traces of white colour.
Fig.: 193. Kharwai: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 194. Urden: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 195.(Detail from Fig.: 194). Urden: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 196. Urden, Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 197.(Detail from Fig.: 196). Urden: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 198. Mahadeo Hills(Astachal West): Mesolithic, White.
Fig.: 199.(Detail of Fig.: 198). Mahadeo Hills(Astachal West):Mesolithic, White.
Fig.: 200. Gupha Masir: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 201. Sagar: Mesolithic, Yellow.
Fig.: 202. Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 203. Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 204. Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 205. Satkunda: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 206. Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 207.(Detail from Fig.: 206). Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 208. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 209.(Detail from Fig.: 208). Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 210. Kharwai: Mesolithic, Red
Fig.: 211. Urden: Mesolithic, Yellow.
Fig.: 212.(Detail from Fig.: 146). Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 213.(Detail from Fig.: 146). Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 214.(Detail from Fig.: 146). Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 215.(Detail from Fig.: 81). Gupha Masir: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 216. Urden: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 217. Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.

Fig.: 218. Kharwai: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 219. Firengi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 220. Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 221. Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 222.(Detail from Fig.: 221). Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 223. Urden: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 224. Jaora: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 225. Jaora: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 226. Kathotia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 227. Jaora: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 228. Bhimbetka: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 229.(Detail from Fig.: 269). Badami: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 230.(Detail from Fig.: 256). Kherwaghat: Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 231.(Detail from Fig.: 399). Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 232. Badami(Timupa Gudda): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 233. Lakhajoar: Mesolithic, Green.
Fig.: 234. Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 235. Gupha Masir: Mesolithic, Red contourlines on green foundation.
Fig.: 236. Kerwaghat: Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 237.(Detail from Fig.: 1)Baldharia: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 238. Likhanyia(Raja ke Bhaitika): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 239. Kowar Khoh: Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 240. Kerwaghat: Mesolithic(?), Red
Fig.: 241. Robertsganj(Kanadakot):Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 242. Robertganj(Kandakot): Mesolithic(?), Red
Fig.: 243. Mukhaderi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 244. Mukhaderi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 245. Likhanyia(Raja ke Bhaitika):Mesolithic, Red,with secondary(?) white overpainting.
Fig.: 246. Kowar Khoh: Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 247. Kowar Khoh: Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 248. Kerwaghat: Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 249. Kerwaghat: Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 250. Kerwaghat: Mesolithic(?) Red.
Fig.: 251. Kerwaghat: Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 252. Kerwaghat: Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 253. Gojara: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 254. Robertsganj(Panchmukhi Romp): Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 255. Kerwaghat: Mesolithic(?), Red
Fig.: 256. Kerwaghat: Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 257. Kerwaghat: Mesolithic, Yellow.
Fig.: 258. Chhenga Pahar(Lakhamara): Mesolithic(?), Red with traces of white foundation (stippeled).
Fig.: 259. Chhenga Pahar(Lakhamara): Mesolithic(?),Red contourline on white and yellow foundation.
Fig.: 260. Chhenga Pahar(Lakhamara): Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 261. Phuldungri: Mesolithic(?), the bovines historic(?), Red and (stippeled) white.
Fig.: 262. Chehenga Pahar(Chichiria Khol): Mesolithic(?), Red contourlines on white or yellow foundation.
Fig.: 263. Chhenga Pahar(Chichiria Khol): Mesolithic(?), Red on yellow foundation.
Fig.: 264. Chhenga Pahar(Chichiria Khol): Mesolithic(?), Red with white contourlines (stippeled).
Fig.: 265. Chhenga Pahar(Chichiria Khol): Mesolithic(?), Red contourlines on white foundation.
Fig.: 266. Chhenga Pahar(Chichiria Khol): Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 267. Chhenga Pahar(Chichiria Khol): Mesolithic(?), White
Fig.: 268. Chhenga Pahar: Mersolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 269. Badami: Mesolithic, Red.

Fig.: 270. Velary Kombay:Mesolithic, Red with traces of original white colour.
Fig.: 271. Badami(Hiregudda): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 272. Badami(Hiregudda): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 273. Badami(Hiregudda): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 274. Badami(Timupa Gudda): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 275. Hampi(Venkatapura): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 276. Benakal Forest(Mallapur): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 277. Badami: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 278. Benakal Forest(Mallapur): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 279.(Detail from Fig.: 178). Benakal Forest(Hire Benakal):Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 280. Sanganunpalli: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 281. Hampi(Sugryha Guha): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 282. Sanganunpalli: Mesolithic,Red.
Fig.: 283.(Detail from Fig.: 349). Settavaray: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 284. Sangankallu, Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 285. Kokapet: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 286. Odyattur: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 287. Settavaray: Mesolithic, Red contour lines with traces of original white infillings in the upper animal and the ovoid.
Fig.: 288. Sanganunpalli: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 289. Chintakunta, Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 290. Badami(Timupa Gudda): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 291. Badami(Aregudda): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 292. Hire Benakal: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 293. Sanganunpalli: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 294. Ketavaram: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 295. Settavaray: Mesolithic, Red contourlines with traces of white foundation.
Fig.: 296. Benakal Forest (Hire Benakal):Mesolithic,Red.
Fig.: 297. Piklihal: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 298. Henanegala Galge(Sri Lanka): Mesolithic, Red contourlines over white foundation.
Fig.: 299. Henanegala Galge(Sri Lanka): Mesolithic, Red with accompamying white lines.
Fig.: 300. Henanegala Galge(Sri Lanka): Mesolithic, Red contourlines over white foundation.
Fig.: 301.(Detail from Fig.: 269). Badami: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 302.(Detail from Fig.: 269). Badami: Mesolithic,Red.
Fig.: 303.(Detail from Fig.: 271). Badami(Hiregudda): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 304. Settavaray: Mesolithic,Yellow contourlines over red foundation.
Fig.: 305. Settavaray: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 306.(Detail from Fig.: 216). Badami(Timupa Gudda): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 307.(Detail from the Fig.: 270). Velary Combay: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 308. Settavaray: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 309.(Detail from the Fig.: 347). Alampadi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 310.(Detail from Fig.:277). Badami: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 311. Badami: Mesolithic, Red
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Fig.: 313. Ketavaram: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 314. Settavaray: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 315. Marayoor: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 316.(Detail from Fig.: 269). Badami: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 317.(Detail from Fig.: 251). Badami: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 318.(Detail from Fig.: 251). Badami: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 319.(Detail from Fig.: 232). Badami(Timupa Gudda): Mesolithic.
Fig.: 320.(Detail from Fig.: 269). Badami: Mesolithic,Red.
Fig.: 321.(Detail from Fig.: 269). Badami: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 322.(Detail from Fig.: 271). Badami(Hiregudda): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 323.(Detail from Fig.: 269). Badami: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 324. Badami: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 325.(Detail from Fig.: 272). Badami(Hiregudda): Mesolithic, Red.

Fig.: 326.(Detail from Fig.: 273). Badami(Hiregudda): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 327.(Detail from Fig.: 272). Badami(Hiregudda): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 328. Velary Combay: Mesolithic, Red, with traces of white foundation.
Fig.: 329.(Detail from Fig.: 270). Velary Kombay: Mesolithic, Red contourlines, traces of white foundation.
Fig.: 330.(Detail from Fig.: 270). Velary Kombay. Mesolithic, Red contourlines with traces of original white colour.
Fig.: 331.(Detail from Fig.: 270). Velary Kombay: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 332. Velary Kombay: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig : 333. Badami: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 334. Benakal Forest (Mallapur):Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 335. Korugodu: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 336. Korugodu: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 337. Hampi (Sugryha Guha): Mesolithic,Boundry line and dagger chalcolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 338.(Detail from Fig.: 337). Hampi(Sugryha Guha): Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 339. Korugodu: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 340.(Detail from Fig.: 162). Hire Benakal: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 341. Hire Benakal: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 342. Hire Benakal: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 343. Ketavaram: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 344. Hire Benakal:Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 345. Ketavaram: Mesolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 346.(Detail from Fig.: 347). Alampadi: Mesolithic, Red, the zick-zack lines in white.
Fig.: 347. Alampadi: Mesolithic, Red with traces of white parallel lines.
Fig.: 348.(Detail from Fig.: 347).Alampadi: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 349. Settavaray: Mesolithic, Red.
Fig.: 350. Bainete Banda: Period(?), Engraving filled in red.
Fig.: 351. Bainete Banda: Period(?), Red.
Fig.: 352. Bainete Banda: Period(?), Red.
Fig.: 353. Bainete Banda: Period(?), Engraving filled in red.
Fig.: 354. Bainete Banda: Period(?), Engraving filled in red.
Fig.: 355. Bainete Banda: Period(?), Engraving filled in red.
Fig.:.356. Bainete Banda: Period(?), Red.
Fig.: 357. Bainete Banda: Period(?), Lizzard engraved and filled in red, the figure overlaying the engraving red.
Fig.: 358. Bainete Banda: Period(?), Red.
Fig.: 359. Bainete Banda: Period(?), Red.
Fig.: 360. Bainete Banda: Period(?), Red.
Fig.: 361. Kharwai: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 362. Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla:Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 363. Narsinghgarh(Khakshila):Chalcolithic,Red.
Fig.: 364. Narsinghgarh(Khakshila):Chalcolithic,Red.
Fig.: 365. Narsinghgarh(Khakshila):Chalcolithic,Red.
Fig.: 366. Kharwai: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 367. Jaora: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 368. Modi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 369. Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla:Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 370. Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla:Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 371. Kanjadei: Chalcolithic, Red.
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Fig.: 373. Lakhajoar: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 374. Khanjadei: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 375. Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla:Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 376. Ganesh Ghati: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.:.377. Raisen(Ramchaja): Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 378. Kharwai: Chalcolithic, White.
Fig.: 379. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.

Fig.: 380. Abchand: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 381. Urden: Chalcolithic, White.
Fig.: 382. Urden: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 383. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 384. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 385. Lakhajoar: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 386. Urden: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 387. Narsinghgarh(Khakshila):Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 389. Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla:Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 390. Satkunda: Chalcolithic, White.
Fig.: 391. Raisen(Ramchaja): Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 392. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 393. Chibbar Nulla: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 394. Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla:Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 395. Jaora: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 396. Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla:Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 397. Kathotia: Chalcolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 398. Urden: Chalcolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 399. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 400. Jaora: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 401. Kathotia: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 402. Koppagallu: Neolithic, Bruising.
Fig.: 403. Raisen(Ramchaja): Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 404. Dekan(Adarshila): Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 405. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 406. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 407. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 407. Putli Karar: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 409. Kathotia: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 410. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
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Fig.: 412. Urden: Historic, Red.
Fig.: 413. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 414. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
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Fig.: 416. Pahargarh(Asan River):Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 417. Gelpur: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 418. Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla:Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 419. Chatur Bhoj Nath Nulla:Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 420. Chibbar Nulla: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 421. Firengi: Chalcolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 422. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 423. Gelpur: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 424. Chibbar Nulla: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 425. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
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Fig.: 437. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.

Fig.: 438. Dekan (Adarshila): Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 439. Chibbar Nulla: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 440. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 441. Urden: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 442. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 443. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 444. Jaora: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 445. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 446. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 447. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 448. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 449. Firengi: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 450. Koppagallu: Chalcolithic(?), Bruising.
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Fig.: 453. Bangawan: Historic(?), Red.
Fig.: 454. Bangawan: Historic(?), Red.
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Fig.: 456. Kowar Khoh: Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 457. Robertsganj(Janaiman):Chalcolithic, Red.
Fig.: 458. Robertsganj(Janaiman):Chalcolithic, Red.
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Fig.: 461. Robertsganj(Panchmukhi Romp):Historic,Red.
Fig.: 462. Robertsganj(Panchmukhi Romp):Historic,Red.
Fig.: 463. Piklihal: Neolithic, Red.
Fig.: 464. Piklihal: Neolithic, Red.
Fig.: 465. Piklihal: Neolithic, Red.
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Fig.: 468. Maski: Chalcolithic, Bruising.
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Fig.: 470. Ketavaram: Neolithic, Red.
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Fig.: 476. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 477. Koppagallu: Period(?),Bruising.
Fig.: 478. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 479. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 480. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 481. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
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Fig.: 483. Piklihal: Neolithic, Red.
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Fig.: 485. Piklihal: Neolithic, Red.
Fig.: 486. Ketavaram: Neolithic, Red.
Fig.: 487. Ketavaram: Neolithic, Red.
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Fig.: 489. Ketavaram: Neolithic, Red.
Fig.: 490. Ketavaram: Neolithic(?), Engraving.
Fig.: 491. Ketavaram: Neolithic, Red.
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Fig.: 493. Koppagallu: Neolithic(?), Bruising.

Fig.: 494. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 495. Madurai (Sundarajanpatti):Period(?), Red.
Fig.: 496. Kilvalay: Period(?), Red.
Fig.: 497. Kilvalay: Period(?), Red.
Fig.: 498. Hire Benakal: Chalcolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 499. Hire Benakal: Chalcolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 500. Hire Benakal: Chalcolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 501. Hire Benakal: Chalcolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 502. Benakal Forest(Oniki Kandi): Period(?), Red.
Fig.: 503. Benakal Forest(Rampura): Period(?), Red
Fig.: 504. Benakal Forest(Rampura): Period(?), Red.
Fig.: 505. Benakal Forest(Oniki Kandi): Chalcolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 506. Benakal Forest(Oniki Kandi): Chalcolithic(?), Red.
Fig.: 507. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 508. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 509. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 510. Benakal Forest(Rampura):Chalcolithic, Red.
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Fig.: 512. Yerdanur: Chalcolithic(?), Red.
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Fig.: 514. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 515. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 516. Maski: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 517. Maski: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 518. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 519. Maski: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 520. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 521. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 522. Koppagallu: Period(?), Bruising.
Fig.: 523. Ketavaram: Period(?), Red.
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